



PRESS RELEASE

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GHA Strengthen Stroke and Rehabilitation Services

The GHA are delighted to announce improvements in the stroke and rehabilitation services at St Bernard's Hospital.

The GHA is now able to offer emergency treatment in the form of clot busting medication for certain types of stroke. This treatment has been shown to increase the number of patients discharged from hospital and improve their independence and quality of life.

Early detection of a developing stroke is the key to the success of this treatment. To that end a 24/7 diagnostic stroke service has been set up at the A&E and Radiology Departments to ensure that a formal diagnostic report is available within an hour of a CT being performed and treatment started once the diagnosis is made.

Sister Lisa Bennett-Long alongside Doctor Keith Gracia, Senior Physiotherapist, Mrs Amanda Danino and Senior Occupational Therapist, Ms Jenna Cantelo have been working closely with our in-house Electro Medical and Building Works' teams towards implementing a dedicated stroke rehabilitation ward within Captain Murchison Ward. The Ward has undergone extensive re-development to provide an acute monitoring unit with telemetry monitors that allow patients' heart rates, blood pressure, breathing and other vital signs to be monitored, in addition to a purpose built rehabilitation therapy gymnasium to provide patients with a programme of exercise and education sessions.

This enhanced rehabilitation service is part of the GHA's wider continuing efforts to improve clinical care outcomes not only for those patients who have suffered a stroke, but also for the frail and older members of the community who have been admitted into hospital. This ensures that a safe and timely discharge takes place, thus maximising independence.



The new service will be delivered by a multi-disciplinary team which includes Nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Dieticians, Speech and Language Therapists and Doctors who have undergone stroke and rehabilitation training, locally and in the UK.

The GHA are sincerely grateful to the Lions International Club Gibraltar for their kind financial donation for the purchase of rehabilitation equipment for patients being treated in the new Acute Rehabilitation Unit within Captain Murchison Ward.

Doctor Keith Gracia, an Associate Specialist with extensive stroke experience and skills in stroke medicine, will be overseeing the stroke care pathway, as well as, taking an active lead in the rehabilitation pathway of patients.

Sister Bennett-Long spoke of the pleasure of working alongside her health care colleagues to provide a fully integrated care pathway, which provides our patients with the best possible evidence based care and promote clinical excellence.

Medical Director Dr Daniel Cassaglia said, "Upgrading our stroke care pathway is a huge step forward in the clinical care we are now able to deliver at the GHA. This project has involved engagement from many different professionals in the GHA who have, once again, worked together to achieve improvements in the care pathway of our stroke patients."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F Costa MP spoke of the developments: "Strokes are unfortunately common and can severely threaten a person's life and general wellbeing. It is therefore extremely important that we do all we can with the view to providing patients with the best possible outcome when treating the initial episode and the following rehabilitation. I am confident that the recent works at Captain Murchison Ward, as well as the on-going training received by our medical professionals, will greatly enhance our existing services in the treatment and rehabilitation of stroke patients. I must sincerely thank all those who have been involved to help achieve yet another important milestone."