

8 April 2011

Communications Department  
Tel: 01225 82 5849/5799/6230

communication@ruh.nhs.uk  
www.ruh.nhs.uk

## Press Release

### Providing the best possible care for patients with Parkinson's at the RUH

The Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust is working with local people with Parkinson's to ensure they can have confidence in the care they receive if they come into the RUH.

On Tuesday 12th April, Steve Ford, Chief Executive of Parkinson's UK, the national research and support charity is attending a lunch at the RUH to learn more about what the hospital has been doing so far, and to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the local Bath support group.

About 120,000 people in the UK have Parkinson's and up to 20 are admitted each month to the RUH, so most clinical staff will be looking after people with PD from time to time, whatever their specialty. Most people who get Parkinson's are aged 50 or over but younger people can get it too. One in 20 is under the age of 40.

It is important that staff understand the problems that Parkinson's causes for people in hospital. A particular challenge is managing medication, which can be complex – and need to be given strictly at the right time. Amongst other initiatives, the RUH Parkinson's project group has set up a staff website with easy access to essential information and 'top tips for care'.

The work at the RUH is being lead by Consultant Physician Dr Dorothy Robertson who is a specialist in treating Parkinson's. She says: "Parkinson's Disease is often not what brings patients into hospital, but it can be what keeps them in if we don't get their care right. We want to make sure that if someone with Parkinson's is admitted to the RUH, all our staff know exactly what to look for, what to do and how to access help. The work we are doing with the support of Parkinson's UK is an ongoing process and we will be listening to our staff, patients and their carers to make sure we provide the best possible care "

People with Parkinson's don't have enough of a chemical called dopamine because some nerve cells in their brain have died. Without dopamine people can find that their movements become slower so it takes longer to do things. The loss of nerve cells in the brain causes [the symptoms of Parkinson's](#) to appear. There's currently no cure for Parkinson's and we don't yet know why people get the condition. Parkinson's doesn't directly cause people to die, but symptoms do get worse over time.

The disease is named after an eighteenth century physician, Dr James Parkinson but records of the symptoms have been found to go back much further. Dr Parkinson was the

son of an apothecary/surgeon, he was born on 11 April 1755, which is why a [Parkinson's Awareness Week](#) is held in April each year.

**ENDS**

**NOTES:**

Dr Robertson and Steve Ford will be available to be interviewed at 2pm on the 12th April 2011. Please contact the Communications office for more information and to request an interview.

For more information about Parkinson's please go to [www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)