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New Hip Fracture Unit opens at the RUH

Some of the Royal United Hospital's frailest patients are now receiving improved care, following the opening of a new Hip Fracture Unit.

Previously these patients were primarily looked after by the hospital's orthopaedic team, but a new team of geriatric medicine specialists is now working alongside the orthopaedic surgeons to provide day-to-day care on the 20-bed unit.

While the orthopaedic team provides the surgery and post-surgical reviews, holistic medical care begins from the patient's admission.

The new unit will provide a number of benefits to patients including ensuring they are operated on more quickly following their admission, reducing the amount of time they need to stay in hospital, and providing a dedicated time slot for a doctor to talk to patients' relatives about their care.

Consultant Geriatrician Katrina Hicks says: "Around 10 patients per week come to the RUH having suffered a fractured hip, and some of these patients are among the most elderly and frailest of the patients we admit.

"There is clear evidence that patients who are cared for jointly by geriatric and orthopaedic teams recover better, because we are able to treat other medical conditions patients may have at the same time and consider issues with their rehabilitation.

"This new system is recognised as best practice and puts the RUH among other pioneering units nationally in optimising the care of this vulnerable group."

For a Trust our size, we see a relatively large number of patients with a broken hip, or fractured neck of femur, and as the elderly population rises this number will only increase.

One of the hospital's main priorities for the current year is to improve the quality of care received by this group of patients. Along with introducing the new hip fracture unit, we are looking at ways to free up our busy theatres to provide more time for trauma operating time.

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