

Press Release

Issue date 19 June 2007

RUH highlights the mental health needs of older patients

On Wednesday 20 June, the mental health needs of older patients will be particularly highlighted at the launch of the 'Let's Respect' Campaign. This campaign will raise awareness of the needs of older people who have depression, delirium, dementia or learning difficulties.

At any one time, older people occupy up to two thirds of NHS beds and as many as 60 percent of them will have some mental health needs. For example, Dementia affects about 1 in 20 people over 65 years of age and as many as one in three of those who come into hospital.

Janet Saunders, clinical services manager for older people at the RUH, is jointly managing the awareness event with colleagues from the RUH and BANES PCT St Martin's Hospital Sulis unit.

Janet says: "The early recognition and diagnosis of dementia is really important in helping patients and their families manage this long-term condition effectively. Delirium and depression are also common problems, which can have serious or even life-threatening consequences. Patients who have any of these conditions can also experience increased problems in an unfamiliar hospital environment.

"It is vitally important that staff know to look out for the signs and symptoms of each condition and how to give the best care. Good assessment and the right approach and treatments can make all the difference."

The event will also mark the launch of the NHS 'Let's Respect' training resource box, published by the Department of Health, which offers materials to support nurses working in general hospitals to help them better recognise and meet the needs of patients with mental health problems. The box contains powerful images and case studies to provide information and practical suggestions about caring for and meeting the needs of these patients.

There will also be general information available aimed at helping families and carers, with leaflets from the Research Institute for Care of the Elderly in Bath and from national and local sources of support in relation to dementia care and depression.

Ends

For further information please contact Jane Farmer, communications and media relations manager, telephone 01225 825849.