Successful pilot sees non-medical endoscopy training roll out

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The first group of health professionals have successfully completed a new accelerated training programme to become non-medical endoscopists (NMEs), providing the NHS with increased diagnostic capacity that in turn enables earlier intervention and improved patient outcomes.

Developed by Health Education England (HEE) with Joint Advisory Group on GI Endoscopy (JAG), the programme is now being rolled out more widely to support the Secretary of State’s commitment of an additional 200 NMEs by 2018.

40 trainees started the NME programme in 2016, training in two cohorts. The accelerated programme provides health professionals with the skills and knowledge to perform either upper gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy or flexible sigmoidoscopy procedures, which have traditionally been carried out by doctors.

Upskilling staff as NMEs frees doctor’s time, providing expanded workforce capacity, greater skill mix and improved services for patients.

Professor Wendy Reid, National Director of Education and Quality and Medical Director at HEE, said:

We know that early diagnosis is vital to improve patient outcomes, and a workforce with the
right skills and in the right numbers is essential to ensure this.

Our new NME training programme will help to deliver a workforce with the capacity needed to meet increasing demand. Reducing the amount of time patients need to wait for a diagnosis and enabling earlier treatment.

It's an intensive but ultimately rewarding course, as Jane Homer a trainee from the first cohort explains:

The NME role is an extension to my current job and it has been a really enjoyable challenge to learn a new skill set, and whilst I acknowledge I am by no means an expert in this field yet, I do feel I am competent and safe.

This has been an amazing experience, and by far the steepest learning curve. I am so glad that I had the privilege to complete this accelerated learning programme.

Mr Neil Cripps, colorectal surgeon and clinical supervisor at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust where Jane works, was impressed by her progress:

Jane has become a very competent safe and comfortable flexible sigmoidoscopist. She is aware of the pressures on newly qualified non-medical endoscopists and we will ensure that she has continuous mentorship to support her.

The next training course is expected to start this month. For further information about the course contact HEE.DiagnosticProgramme@nhs.net [7].


Links
[5] https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about
[7] mailto:HEE.DiagnosticProgramme@nhs.net