

# Newsletter for the Pure General Internal Medicine Programme

*Issue 1*

## The programme so far

Standalone or 'pure' General Internal Medicine (GIM) is an exciting development UK medical training and practise. There are many similarities with the 'hospitalist' movement in the United States of America. A discussion of this is included in an article by Elizabeth Esterbrook in this newsletter.

The three-year Standalone GIM training programme offers a way of building the much needed workforce to address the increasing complexity of patients with medical conditions. Over the last 20 years UK medical practise has tended towards excellence in specialty training and delivery. However, the changing demographics of the UK population is increasing the number of patients with complex comorbidities many of whom do not necessarily fall into a frail and elderly category and therefore a need for excellence in training and delivery of GIM. Additionally, there are large numbers of patients who need the input of a GIM physician because of other, non-physician medical problems or their complex social circumstance. For instance, patients with significant psychiatric conditions or those who are homeless are often in need of the input from physicians who are primarily trained to deliver GIM. Dr Bharathy Kumaravel discusses the Generalism approach to medical training in the Enhancing Generalist Skills programme in this newsletter.

The acute and urgent care plan published earlier this year sets out a number of ambitions which include a better integration of care across community and secondary care settings. Those trained primarily in GIM are in an ideal position to deliver the physician input to such services.

The Standalone GIM pilot programmes are increasingly and excitingly including experience in a community setting. Articles about the current pilot programme offers are also included in this newsletter.

For those of you joining the programme this August and for those of you who joined the programme in February I should like to offer a warm welcome to this exciting development.

# Generalism for postgraduate doctors

By Dr Bharathy Kumaravel

Tomorrow's doctors need to appreciate that health is beyond just diagnosis and treatment of specific conditions. An ageing population is more likely to have multiple morbidities (long-term conditions). For instance, it is common for an 80-year-old patient to present with diabetes, hypertension, COPD, and depression. The challenges of [multimorbidity](#) are that patients present with complex self-care needs; care is provided by several teams often in isolation, resulting in fragmented care and an increased use of resources- including emergency healthcare.

Socioeconomic deprivation can add a further layer of complexity while providing health and well-being care for someone with multi-morbidity. Doctors need to consider the role of [social determinants of health](#) while providing care for their patients.

Advances in healthcare have helped in the management of individual long-term conditions, thereby adding years to our lives. However, to improve the quality of life in later years, doctors need Generalism skills to deal with multiple long-term conditions. General practitioners, diabetologists and geriatricians already appreciate this challenge and work in teams to provide holistic patient care. We need to change the way we train future doctors.

We need a shift away from the current model to integrating Generalism into all specialities, not just a few. Medical education has traditionally been designed around individual specialities (such as medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, cardiology, and ophthalmology). It focuses on training future doctors on the pathology, diagnosis, and treatment of individual health conditions.

We need to integrate Generalism training into medical education - so that future doctors can

- provide [person centred](#) care
- appreciate [population health](#)
- advocate for [social justice](#)
- tackle [health inequalities](#)
- provide [sustainable healthcare](#) and
- deal with complex [multimorbidity](#)

[NHS England](#) is piloting the introduction of Generalism into various levels of health education. In Midlands, we are piloting introducing it in IMT. Work is still in progress; however, it is reassuring to learn that the new curriculum is offering the training and immersive experiences needed for Generalism. Our [Enhance](#) IMT trainees have started demonstrating [leadership](#) skills- [advocating](#), and influencing across boundaries.

We are taking a critical approach to inquiry with key stakeholders- trainees, faculty, administrators, general practitioners, hospital consultants, community trusts, public health colleagues and the voluntary sector to co-create the curriculum. We recently held a stakeholder engagement event to learn about their perceptions and take their views on board while reviewing our programme.

# Hospitalist Medicine in the UK

By Dr Elizabeth Estabrook

The UK is an outlier in its approach to the care of medical patients that are hospitalised. Almost all Western health systems have a “Generalist” who manages the day to day care of patients on the ward. Having trained in Internal Medicine in the USA, I completed an Internal Medicine Residency program and become what they call a “Hospitalist”. Over the last 25 years this has been the fastest growing specialty in the USA. Patients admitted with a medical condition are primarily managed the Internal Medicine Hospitalist and specialist input is sought on a case by case basis. This can include anything from acute myocardial infarction, decompensated cirrhosis, to complex lung disease. This model has been shown to be highly effective in improving patient care and reducing length of stay. Of course there is variation in how this model is delivered depending on local resources and specialist care is needed in many cases. However, specialist opinion, diagnostics and interventions are sought in conjunction with the Hospitalist who aims to provide a holistic approach to their care, especially when some patients will need multiple specialties involved in their care. The Internal Medicine physician is a highly respected position for those who wish to be the “diagnosticians” of the hospital. Their opinion is sought in order to evaluate complex and undiagnosed patients and in addition, in many hospitals, actively involved in the day to day management of post-operative patients with complex co-morbidities or complications.

In creating the General Internal Medicine run-through training, NHS England have given the UK an opportunity to develop a similar model. This is not as revolutionary as some might think - we are actually familiar with this model in General Paediatrics and Elderly Care Medicine which already employ a very similar model. For those aged 18-80 a Generalist model has the potential to revolutionise the way we practice hospital medicine. As a recognised specialty that prides itself in diagnosing complex and interesting presentations, as well as the holistic care of patients with complex multi-morbid disease that are hospitalised, it is time that it is recognised as an essential component to NHS care. This model can allow for a rewarding and flexible career for those interested in hospital medicine, whilst having the potential to allow other specialists to have more time to focus on their clinic and procedural lists. As waiting times and demand increase, the Generalist has the potential to improve outcomes both in and outside the hospital.

## General Internal Medicine in Plymouth



At University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust we are delighted to be a part of the second phase of Health Education England's pilot programme for standalone General Internal Medicine training. The catchment population of Derriford Hospital is characterised by diversity (rural and urban populations) with a wide variance in health and life expectancy.

Our department was set up 4 years ago and it prides itself in providing continuity of care to complex patients that do not clearly fit the admission criteria for other subspecialty wards.

The creation of the pilot programme for GIM training comes at a time when there is high demand for delivering complex and comprehensive care to patients with multiple comorbidities in changing healthcare environments.

General Internal Medicine trainees will have to develop a strong base of generalist skills with confidence across different disciplines. Due to the complex multimorbidity of GIM patients, trainees will learn how to coordinate care when input from multiple specialties and teams are needed.

Trainees will have to develop an understanding of their local community and develop skills that allow them to understand population needs and optimal use of resources. At UHP we have therefore linked with the Plymouth Institute of Health and Care Research (PIHR) at the University of Plymouth in order to allow trainees to carry out a supervised project that evaluates novel ways of improving the quality of care delivered to the most vulnerable people in our community.

We have also linked with Peninsula Medical School and trainees will find opportunities to regularly teach Medical students and Physician Associate students. The department also hosts junior doctors who play a major role in helping the department carry out its day to day work. From time to time we hold social events such as our recent International Luncheon (pictured).

At UHP we are very excited to help train the generalists of the future and we know that local populations will benefit tremendously from Health Education England's initiative. We will be receiving our first trainee in August 2023 and we are hoping to help them master not only diagnosis, management and evidence based medicine but to also help them gain a deep understanding of holistic person-centred care.

# Active Sites for 2023-2024

## East Midlands

- Royal Derby Hospital
- Sherwood Forest Hospital NHS Trust
- Northampton General Hospital
- United Lincoln Hospital Trust
- University Hospitals Leicester

## West Midlands

- University Hospitals Birmingham
- Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
- Royal Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust
- University Hospitals Coventry and Warwick
- (Worcester Royal Hospital)
- (Wye Valley NHS Trust)
- (South Warwick NHS Trust)
- (University Hospitals North Midlands NHS Trust)

## South West

- University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

## Wessex

- University Hospital Southampton

## KSS

- East Sussex NHS Trust

## East of England

- Luton & Dunstable University Hospital

# The GIM Bootcamp

## West Midlands Residential Medical Registrar Training Course

Being a Medical Registrar is one of the most important and rewarding roles within hospital medicine. It is however physically and mentally challenging. In recognition of the challenges faced by our higher specialty trainees when taking up this role, The School of Medicine for the West Midlands commissioned Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust to deliver a 3-day residential course specifically designed to cover a wide range of clinical skills and non-clinical skills in a fun and interactive way. The course was codesigned with 202 (West Midlands) Field Hospital (Army Reserve) personnel who help us build in human factors training focusing on leadership and team building.

16 ST4s from our stand alone GIM programme across England joined us, alongside some local IMT3s for three days in May. The delegates attended to various day time training events returning in the evenings for a team dinner and evening training and social events.



The Course was split over three days,

- **Day One-Medical Registrar Clinical Simulation**
- **Day Two-Human Factors**
- **Day Three-Hospital Clinical Simulation Exercise**

The first two days focused on clinical and human factor training leading to the final day exercise where all these skills were tested in a safe and supportive environment.

The course was a great success and enjoyed by both the trainers and the delegates.

The written feedback from the delegates was very positive! Below are some examples.



- “It was the best simulation course I have ever attended”.
- “100% I will surely recommend to my colleagues”.
- “Focus on teamwork, leadership and followership is rarely spoken about in the rest of training. Very dynamic and engaging”.

**The Shrewsbury and Telford team look forward to delivering in again this year.**