

PRESS RELEASE

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Wythenshawe Hospital to provide National Service for Chronic Pulmonary Aspergillosis

The Department of Health has announced that from April 2009 national funding will be provided for a 'National Aspergillosis Centre' at Wythenshawe Hospital in South Manchester. It will be the first national centre for aspergillosis in the world, and will form part of Wythenshawe Hospital's NW Lung Centre, which has a long history and international reputation for treating lung disorders.

The designation of a nationally commissioned service will end any postcode lottery for patients with chronic pulmonary aspergillosis (CPA) – an incurable fungal disease of the lung. It is estimated that there are 500 – 750 cases of CPA in England, and that the new National Centre will provide access to specialised services in an area of high unmet patient need.

From 1st April 2009, around £4m in funding will be available from the National Commissioning Group for Highly Specialised Services for the CPA service at Wythenshawe Hospital, which already offers inpatient services and the UK's only outpatient clinic for patients with fungal lung infections. It is expected that over the next 5 years, the funding will rise to around £10m per year in line with an anticipated tripling of the number of patients treated for CPA. Antifungal drugs are very costly and patients need long term treatment.

Aspergillosis is a fungal infection that mainly affects the lungs. Whilst most people are immune to the fungal spores, patients with reduced or no immunity such as those with sarcoidosis, Cystic Fibrosis, asthma, TB or after cure of lung cancer are particularly susceptible to developing CPA. Most CPA patients require long-term oral antifungal therapy and some complex surgery, but antifungal drug resistance is an increasing problem, requiring long term intravenous therapy.

The National Aspergillosis Centre will provide patients from across the country with access to a team of specialist staff including two consultants (Professor Denning and Dr Hope), specialists nurses, surgeons, radiologists, clinical research fellows and the Regional Mycology Laboratory, already situated at Wythenshawe Hospital. Clinical research on these uncommon

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disorders will be a major focus of the work, already underwritten by the recent NIHR Translational Research Centre in Lung Disease being co-located at Wythenshawe. This development will deliver a better quality of care for patients with aspergillosis and should help to reduce mortality rates.

Professor David Denning, Clinical Director of the new National Aspergillosis Centre, says: “We’re delighted that the Department of Health will be funding a National Aspergillosis Centre here in South Manchester, which is an area with high rates of respiratory disease. This national service will benefit patients across the UK, by building on the extensive expertise in chronic fungal lung infections and sophisticated laboratory support and allowing us to invest further in our clinical and research capabilities.”

About University Hospital of South Manchester NHS Foundation Trust (UHSM)

UHSM is a major acute teaching hospital trust providing services for adults and children at Wythenshawe Hospital and Withington Community Hospital (the latter owned by Manchester PCT). We are recognised as a centre of clinical excellence, demonstrated by our mortality rates, which are among the lowest in the UK. We provide district general hospital services and specialist tertiary services to our local community. Our fields of specialist expertise include cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery, heart and lung transplantation, respiratory conditions, burns and plastics, cancer and breast care services.

About the NW Lung Centre and CPA service at Wythenshawe Hospital

The NW Lung Centre has 70 inpatient beds, with dedicated outpatient and diagnostic facilities. There are 18 consultants with specialties in allergy, asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, sleep disorders, non-invasive ventilation, interstitial lung disease, lung infection, lung transplantation and lung cancer. Professor Denning and Dr Hope provide a clinical and academic CPA service, which is augmented by three thoracic surgeons, three consultant radiologists specialising in pulmonary radiology, and the Regional Mycology Laboratory (RMLM). The CPA service already runs the Aspergillus Website (www.aspergillus.org.uk), directly supported by the Fungal Research Trust (a registered charity) which has supported the development of centre of excellence in fungal disease in Manchester since 1991.

About the National Commissioning Group for Highly Specialised Services

The National Commissioning Group (NCG) commission medical services for a specific group of patients with extremely rare conditions or which require very unusual or costly treatments. In addition, the NCG advise Ministers on which NHS services are best commissioned nationally rather than locally, to ensure a high quality of clinical care and equity of access for patients, as well as securing value for money.

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