

Multidisciplinary teams

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A patient's guide



.... caring for you 

What is a multidisciplinary team?

A multidisciplinary team (MDT) is a group of doctors and other health professionals with expertise in a specific cancer, who together discuss and manage an individual patient's care. They plan the treatment that is best for you. Communication between different team members is better where they have a formal working relationship. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and the NHS Cancer Plan therefore recommend that the treatment of everyone with cancer should be managed by a multidisciplinary team.

Who is in the team?

This depends on the type of cancer you have. Most teams may involve:

- a surgeon
- a histopathologist (a doctor who makes diagnosis from biopsy samples)
- oncologists (doctors specialised in chemotherapy and radiotherapy)
- a palliative care doctor or nurse (a specialist in easing or relieving the symptoms of cancer)

How – it can be given as a combination of a drip or injection into a vein or in tablet form

Who – Dr David Chao is the consultant cancer specialist at the Royal Free, who will discuss the appropriate drugs with you.
Contact number 020 7794 0500 ext. 34479 (secretary)

How - all initial surgery is done under local anaesthetic in out-patients. Extended surgical procedures carried out at a later stage usually at the Royal Free Hospital are done under general anaesthetic.

Who – all the dermatologists at the Whittington Hospital carry out surgical procedures however advanced/complex surgical procedures are carried by Dr R Wakeel at the Whittington Hospital. All surgery at the Royal Free is carried out by Mr Stephen Hamilton or his team from the plastic surgery unit at the Royal Free.

Contact Number: Dermatology at the Whittington 020 7288 5062 (Plastic Surgery at the Royal Free 020 7794 0500 ext. 33070 (secretary))

Radiotherapy (X-ray treatment)

Where – University College London Hospital or The Royal Free Hospital

How –x-rays are directed at the area to be treated.

Who – Dr Glen Blackman, consultant. You may meet him or members of his team at your outpatient visits to the Whittington or University College London Hospital.

Contact number Dr Blackman – 020 7380 9481 (secretary) Monday - Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Clinical oncology and chemotherapy (recruitment into clinical trials)

Where – all chemotherapy including treatment given through clinical Trials is carried out at the oncology department of the Royal Free Hospital.

- a clinical nurse specialist
- multidisciplinary team coordinator

Other health professionals may also be involved, such as a:

- physiotherapist (who helps and treats people with physical problems caused by an illness)
- occupational therapist (who helps people who have trouble moving around or doing everyday tasks such as dressing, washing or cooking)
- psychologist, dietitian, speech therapist and pharmacist

When an multidisciplinary team meets, they consider all the clinical features and test results that you have had since your cancer diagnosis. This helps them to plan the treatment that is most effective for you, taking into account your age, general health, the cancer stage (its size and whether it has spread) and its grade (which indicates how quickly it may grow or develop). They also take into account your psychological and social needs and ensure these are also met.

How do the teams work?

Some multidisciplinary teams discuss patients from different hospitals, and specialists may be on teams for a number of different types of cancer. How often a multidisciplinary team meets may also vary. This could mean that you have to wait a bit longer to get all the results of your pathology and a treatment plan from your doctor. This can be frustrating and worrying – but the pooling of different types of expertise should mean the best possible decisions are made about your treatment and care.

Research that looked at how effective multidisciplinary teams are in the UK found that as a result of being cared for by an multidisciplinary team you are more likely to:

- receive accurate diagnosis and staging
- be offered a choice of treatments decided by a group of experts, rather than by one doctor
- receive better coordination and continuity of care through all stages of the cancer
- be treated in line with locally-agreed policies and national guidelines
- be offered appropriate and consistent information, as the person giving the information should be more aware of the team's strategy for your care.

The dermatology multidisciplinary team

This consists of:

Dr Riadh Wakeel	Consultant dermatologist and multidisciplinary team lead
Dr Kathy Taghipour	Consultant dermatologist
Dr Natasha Kapur	Consultant dermatologist
Dr Adam Friedmann	Consultant dermatologist
Dr Charanjit Kaur	Pathologists
Dr Glen Blackman	Oncologist
Rudolfo Jackson	MDT Co-ordinators and multidisciplinary team lead
Melanoma Nurse	Clinical nurse specialist/skin Cancer
Lucy Reeves	Clinical nurse specialist/skin cancer

Key worker

Lucy is the key worker for the skin cancer multidisciplinary team. Patients who wish to discuss any of the multidisciplinary team decisions, please contact Lucy Reeves on 020 7288 5062 direct line or 07827 662 065 mobile.

More information about treatments

Surgery

Where - the initial surgery or skin biopsy is usually performed here at the Whittington Hospital by one of our consultant dermatologists and specialist nurse. We have a dedicated out-patient theatre which is located in the out-patient department on 3B. Subsequent surgery eg. wider excision of a malignant melanoma or sentinel lymph node biopsy is normally done at the Royal Free Hospital.