ONLINE LINKS  (Recent News & publications from various websites and newsletter sources)

~ Improving cancer survival
The King’s Fund, in partnership with Cancer Research UK, has published ‘How to improve cancer survival: explaining England’s relatively poor rates’. This report considers the existing differences in cancer survival rates between countries and discusses the reasons for these variations including: stage at diagnosis and diagnostic delay; treatment factors; patient factors; and tumour biology and physiological/biological factors. The authors suggest that the most plausible drivers for improved survival rates are: diagnosis at an early stage, including through effective screening programmes; access to optimal treatment; and improvements in the management of older people with cancer.
http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/cancer_survival.html

~ Charter for end of life care published by RCN and RCGP
The RCN and the RCGP have published a new charter for end of life care that sets out best practice standards that all patients deserve from their primary health care team. The charter pledges include:
- do all they can to help the patient preserve their independence, dignity and sense of personal control throughout the course of their illness
- support those close to the patient, both as the patient approaches the end of their life and through their bereavement.

~ Supporting people with dementia
The DoH has published ‘Common core principles for supporting people with dementia: a guide to training the social care and health workforce’. The eight principles can be used to enable workforce development for any member of staff working in health or social care with people at any stage of dementia. The common core principles are relevant to every setting and provide a basis for a general understanding of the condition. They aim to build workers’ confidence in adapting their actions and communication in order to respond appropriately to the person with dementia. Signposting to resources and further reading has been included at the end of the guide.
~ Dignity and nutrition inspection programme
The Care Quality Commission has published the next batch of reports from the dignity and nutrition inspection programme. This programme intends to look at 100 NHS trusts, and focuses on whether people are treated with dignity and respect and get food and drink that meets their needs. All inspection visits are unannounced. The teams are led by CQC compliance inspectors supported by:

- External nurse advisers – who have broad experience and current ‘on the ground’ responsibilities, so that they can check clinical practice against current professional guidance.
- Experts by experience – people who can provide the perspective of patients.

They collect the views of patients on the wards they visit, and use feedback already held from local involvement networks and other local groups.

A national report into the key findings will be published in September.

http://www.cqc.org.uk/reviewsandstudies/inspectionprogramme-dignityandnutritionforolderpeople.cfm

~ New guidance on management of mental health issues in pregnancy & postnatal period
The RCOG has published Management of Women with Mental Health Issues during Pregnancy and the Postnatal Period, which highlights the role of maternity services in the early identification of high-risk women and assessment of current illness, and describes principles of service organisation for health providers to meet these needs.


~ Recent research on support workers in health
The NHS Confederation has published a digest by SDO Networks which highlights recent research on support workers in health. This evidence can help managers understand the increasing importance of support staff and how they can best be used as part of a flexible modern workforce. It examines how to make better use of healthcare assistants; what the evidence says about changing skill mix and impact on care; how managers in Chester used assistant practitioners to improve palliative care; and how managers in London and Worcester are using assistant staff to meet QIPP targets in maternity and therapy services.

http://www.nhsconfed.org/Publications/digests/Pages/SDO-Digest-1.aspx

~ New web systems aim to improve services for MS patients
What is believed to be the first electronic register to capture information from both people with multiple sclerosis and clinicians has been launched with the aim of improving services for patients in the future.

David Ford, director of health informatics research at the College of Medicine, who is leading the project, said the aim was to create a register that would work with any clinical system so that it can be rolled out across the UK. ‘We hope the pilot will produce very useful information to give us a much better understanding of the impact of MS on people’s lives. This will be useful in configuring services more accurately so that they better match people’s needs,’ he said.


~ Local adult neurology services for the next decade
This report from the Royal College of Physicians the evaluates local adult neurology services and finds that overall they are poorly organised and do not meet patients’ needs. The report makes three proposals:

1. an expansion and improvement of local services with a shift in emphasis from scheduled to emergency care
2. better organised care for patients with long-term neurological conditions, managed in part through an enhanced role for specialist nurses and general practitioners with a special interest in neurology
3. better local planning of services with increased clinical involvement within a commissioner/provider forum, creating a neurological network to improve clinical and financial outcomes.

http://bookshop.rcplondon.ac.uk/details.aspx?e=354

~ Call for action to halt decline in UK clinical trials
Efforts to increase the numbers of clinical trials carried out in the UK are being hampered by EU rules and bureaucracy, according to the NHS Confederation’s European Office. In the Confederation’s submission to the European Commission, they highlight figures which show that the UK’s involvement in global clinical trials has "dropped dramatically" since the introduction of the EU Clinical Trials Directive.

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