Changing NHS Culture
Prevention team of the year 2016

These are turbulent times for NHS workers. Clinical teams are dealing with a difficult system that presents challenges with waiting lists, funding, and limited resources. The BMJ Awards recognises and promotes the innovative work of teams who are overcoming these challenges, whilst always putting patients at the heart of their practice.

We spoke to Prevention Team of the year winner 2016, Kerry Lyons, to document the impact of the win and learn more about the necessary cultural and behavioural shifts taking place within the NHS.

The winning team: ( Left to right ) : Joyce Southern, Sr Carole Corbett, Sr and Team Leader Kerry Lyons, Consultant Dr Vinod Patel, and Sr Maxine Howarth.

Kerry is an alcohol nurse specialist and the Hospital Alcohol Liaison team leader at Tameside Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Greater Manchester. The five-strong team independently run the Liver Fibroscan service and 7/7 Ambulatory Detox Clinic – in addition to 8-8pm 7/7 response work. They provide guidance, referral to a fibroscan if liver damage is suspected, and referral to community services on discharge.

Harmful alcohol use in Tameside, part of Greater Manchester is significantly higher than the national average, more than one in four adults drinks above recommended limits with a rise in morbidity and mortality in recent years. Before the service was launched in 2013, there was no alcohol awareness training for any grade of staff, no acute alcohol pathway, no alcohol screening, and no referrals from the hospital to the community alcohol team.

Following the winning of the Prevention Team of the Year award, Kerry and her team have developed a maternity screening pathway, one of the first of its kind in the UK and started to act as a share demand pathway to reduce the prevalence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and help aid early diagnosis. The team has also started to look into alcohol related brain injury.

“Winning the Prevention Team of the Year award has inspired us to develop even further. It has really motivated and enabled us to actively engage in innovation and further progress the service. We are always striving to deliver the absolute best, plus a little bit more. Receiving the national recognition that the award brings has aided us in doing that.”
The Hospital Alcohol Liaison Service has received permanent funding from the CCG since winning the award and is becoming an integrated care organisation.

“We knew we were meeting all our targets and obtaining phenomenal patient outcomes. With the current austerity that is such in the NHS, we were still anxious about continuation of a small team likes ours. Before the awards, we were CCG funded without a permanent contract or permanent status. Receiving permanent funding has been brilliant.”

The award has had a positive effect on their profile externally and internally within the trust as well as enabling them to raise their media profile.

“ITV came to the trust and we have received local radio interest. The publicity surrounding the team has inspired other trusts to make contact to find out what they can do to improve their own services. We have been working collaboratively with them. We’ve always been very keen on sharing best practice and have actively been in contact with other hospitals. It’s one big circle, everyone being on the same page enables a trust to make a difference.”

The BMJ Awards' judges remarked how the team's work is even more impressive given the context of a district general hospital in special measures when the service was conceived. Stating that the small dedicated team brings clinicians and an administrator together to ensure the service outcomes are monitored and improved on a continuous basis.

“The acknowledgment from the judges that the model works, is highly effective and the costs of service is small compared to the outcome, encourages other trusts who are struggling, as we previously were, to follow the model enabling them to actively improve things moving forward. The judges mirrored our thought in relation to developing the business case and the idea that moving forward is all about thinking differently through looking at new models of social care and intervention that will be more effective not necessarily at greater costs.”

“I would encourage teams thinking of entering the awards to just go for it, there is nothing to lose. If you’ve got a model of work that’s highly effective whether you’re a small team or not it’s definitely worth taking the opportunity to get recommended and more importantly to be able to share that best practice.”

“Prevention is fundamental to the future health of the nation and the sustainability of the health service and PHE is proud to sponsor the prevention team of the year award at the BMJ awards.

We would like to recognise all the amazing work that all the nominees did in the field of prevention this year and it’s a particular pleasure to see how winning the award has in fact helped the team secure permanent funding for their work. We hope this inspires other teams to enter next year.”

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