

Pennine GP Learning Group

Minutes of meeting

Date: 1st March 2017

Topic: Clinical Case Study: Chronic Fatigue with a review of the diagnosis and management of vitamin B12 deficiency.

Members present: Dr Rukhsana Hussain, Dr Emma Cole, Dr Sue Thomis, Dr Ainie Chaudhry, Dr Don Munyaneza

Apologies: Several members sent their apologies for not being able to attend

1. Dr Hussain welcomed new members to the group and explained the purpose of the learning group. She signposted them to the rules and resources on the website.
2. The members all had an informal chat regarding work scenarios and shared general advice regarding how to tackle certain difficulties in the workplace. Dr Hussain also informed the group that she has been newly appointed as Sessional GP Representative for the Calderdale LMC and will be looking to find ways to ensure that Sessional GPs in the area are included in local events and updates as well as supported by the LMC.
3. Dr Hussain updated members on some issues that were relevant to them, that had been discussed at recent LMC meetings.
4. Dr Hussain presented "**A case of chronic fatigue**". We discussed as a group how we would evaluate such a patient as well as the possible differential diagnoses.

Dr Hussain then presented a summary of the diagnosis and management of vitamin B12 deficiency, based on The British Society of Haematology 2014 guidelines and a BMJ Clinical Review of Vitamin B12 deficiency.

We discussed how the serum B12 assay is not an accurate test and that as GPs we sometimes assume that tests have a certain specificity and sensitivity when they may not. Knowing that the assay is not a robust test will affect our interpretation of the results and hopefully ensure we do not miss cases of B12 deficiency.

The guidelines advise us to focus on the clinical picture of the patient and that if we suspect deficiency on the basis of this we should treat, even if there is discordance between this and the results. We admitted that current clinical practice in the area was not in keeping with this. Dr Hussain mentioned that the presentation could be used as supportive evidence to justify clinical actions which are not the norm in the area at present.

We learned about several other tests which can be used to detect vitamin B12 deficiency that are not widely available including plasma total homocysteine, plasma methylmalonic acid and holotranscobalamin.

We reminded ourselves of the specificity and sensitivity of Parietal Cell and Intrinsic Factor antibodies in the diagnosis of Pernicious Anaemia.

The presentation raised several interesting discussion points and the group agreed that the information they had learned would impact their practice. Dr Hussain encouraged members to make their colleagues aware of this important subject as she suspected that many GPs were not aware of these guidelines and would not question serum B12 results if they came back in the normal range.

Action Plan

1. The group will meet again in the 1st week of April. Members will have a think and inform Dr Hussain regarding the topic(s) they may want to cover in the next meeting.
2. Dr Hussain will book the venue for the next meeting.
3. Dr Hussain will arrange for the presentation and minutes to be uploaded to the website.