



Minister opens treatment centre for blood disorders

by Eoin English

MINISTER for Health Dr James Reilly officially opened a new dedicated treatment centre at Cork University Hospital (CUH) yesterday which will deliver vast improvements in the quality of care for people with bleeding disorders.

Before the €430,000 haemophilia centre was developed, patients with the genetic blood disorder which impairs the body's ability to control blood clotting were treated in CUH's emergency department or were admitted to an in-patient bed. But since the new centre opened in March, these patients can be seen daily, if necessary, in the new facility.

Located on the ground floor of the hospital, it has four treatment rooms, an education and meeting room, office space, its own external entrance, and waiting area.

All the specialised staff including medical, nursing and administration are located on the one site.

"There are approximately 375 patients with bleeding disorders in the HSE South area and, since the centre opened, services have greatly improved," CUH Group CEO Tony McNamara said.

"Staff can administer blood clotting factor replacement therapy to patients before they go for dental or other day-case surgical procedures, which avoids the need for in-patient admission."

The centre provides a service to adults and children with bleeding disorders, including investigation, diagnosis and

management at its outpatient review, treatment and genetic counselling clinics.

Professor John Bonnar, chairperson of the National Haemophilia Council, said he was delighted that people with bleeding disorders in the Cork region now have the appropriate facilities.

"This was a much needed requirement for the haemophilia community and will allow the standards of care which the National Haemophilia Council advises for the Cork region to be provided," he said.



Minister for Health Dr James Reilly meets clinical nurse specialists as he visited Cork University Hospital to officially open their new Haemophilia Centre. Picture: GMC Photography

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Blood disorder centre opened

News in brief

A NEW haemophilia centre that will provide appropriate facilities and privacy for patients was launched by Health Minister Dr James Reilly yesterday.

The unit at Cork University Hospital can treat the 375 patients with bleeding disorders in the HSE South area.

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New haemophilia centre for Cork

A new centre to treat people with haemophilia living in the south of the country has been officially opened by the Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly. The Haemophilia Centre, which is located at Cork University Hospital (CUH), provides services to children and adults with haemophilia - a group of inherited blood disorders that affect the blood's ability to form clots. Protein factors in white blood cells clot and form scabs on cuts, so without them a person could bleed to death from a relatively minor cut. People with haemophilia require transfusions of blood plasma and blood products in order to maintain a suitable level of blood clotting ability. Signs of haemophilia can include spontaneous bleeding, large bruises, bleeding for a long time after a cut or surgery and bleeding into the muscles or joints.

The Haemophilia Centre also provides services to people with other bleeding disorders, such as Von willebrand disease - a more common genetic bleeding disorder than haemophilia, which usually has less severe bleeding complications. "There are approximately 375 patients with bleeding disorders in the HSE South area and since the centre opened to patients last March, services have greatly improved. Staff can administer blood clotting factor replacement therapy to patients before they go for dental or other day case surgical procedures, which avoids the need for inpatient admission," explained chief executive of the CUH Group, Tony McNamara. He pointed out that prior to the centre's opening, these patients had to be treated in the emergency department (ED) or admitted to an inpatient bed.

However now, they can be seen on a daily basis in the centre if required. Furthermore, anyone with a hereditary bleeding disorder who presents at the ED can now be treated at the centre. "We are delighted that adults and children with bleeding disorders in the Cork region now have the appropriate facilities and privacy for their continuing specialised care. This was a much needed requirement for the haemophilia community and will allow the standards of care, which the National Haemophilia Council advises for the Cork region, to be provided. "This will enable the service to be patient centred with the provision of special clinics for genetic counselling, dental care, physiotherapy, and the continuing education and training of all persons with bleeding disorders in co-operation with the Irish Haemophilia Society," explained Prof John Bonnar, chairperson of the National Haemophilia Council.

Staff at the centre include a consultant haematologist, two clinical nurses specialists and a data manager. The centre is located on the ground floor of CUH and accommodation includes four treatment rooms, a meeting room and a waiting area. It cost €430,000 to construct and equip. According to the HSE, the centre has 'very close links' with the other designated comprehensive care haemophilia centres in the country - St James's Hospital and Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin. "The opening of the new centre means that people with hereditary bleeding disorders in the region have access to a dedicated facility which can deliver the highest standard of care, according to established international guidelines," commented consultant haematologist, Dr Cleona Duggan. To join the discussion, register by clicking here .



Hospital haemophilia centre opens five years after damning report

by Evelyn Ring

HEALTH Minister Dr James Reilly will open a new haemophilia centre at Cork University Hospital today — five years after a study found that services at the hospital for people with bleeding disorders were “grossly inadequate”.

The audit, published in November 2006, found there was no dedicated space for care of patients at the centre that was in stark contrast to the excellent haemophilia facilities in Dublin.

The auditors, who returned to the hospital in 2008, found very little had changed and that conditions at the centre were still below standard.

The auditors said the “cuckoo” model of haemophilia centre that had been practiced in Cork, where space was borrowed from other areas if it was free, was unacceptable and patients with haemophilia deserved better.

Overall, the quality of care at the centre was found to be satisfactory, but the audit stated that the infrastructure remained very poor and grossly inadequate.

Last year, Dr Susan O’Shea was appointed to lead the haemophilia service at CUH that currently cares for 375 persons with bleeding disorders.

Dr O’Shea, with her colleagues, Dr Cleona Duggan and Dr Clodagh Ryan, will be responsible for providing the clinical service for the haemophilia population in the hospital’s catchment area.

Out-patient clinics have

already commenced on a weekly basis allowing patients to receive a full review and optimum clinical management of their home treatment.

The centre is also used as a treatment centre during the day where patients with haemophilia can attend for treatment for acute episodes.

Chairman of the National Haemophilia Council, Prof John Bonnar, said the council was delighted that patients with bleeding disorders in the Cork region now had appropriate facilities and privacy for their continuing care.

He pointed out the development allowed the service to be enhanced with the provision of special clinics for genetic counselling, dental care, physiotherapy, counselling and education of all persons with bleeding disorders.

Prof Bonnar said the council had been working with the Health Service Executive, Department of Health and Cork University Hospital for the last five years to secure the new centre.

The council was established in 2004 in response to the recommendations of the Lindsay Report published in 2002 and its main objective is to advise the Minister for Health and the HSE on all aspects of haemophilia care in Ireland.

About one in 5,000 people are born with haemophilia in Ireland and the Lindsay inquiry examined how and why people with a haemophilia received contaminated blood and blood products. Over the last 25 years 104 peo-

ple with haemophilia died from blood-borne viruses.

Chief executive of the Irish Haemophilia Society, Brian O’Mahony said the centre would transform the quality of care for people with bleeding disorders in Munster.

Haemophilia unit

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A NEW haemophilia centre was due to be opened at Cork University Hospital today by the Minister for Health to meet a need first identified five years ago. An audit, in 2006, found that the services at the hospital were "grossly inadequate", while a report in 2008 said while the level of care was satisfactory, the infrastructure was poor.