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# 100th Telestroke patient assessed at the Cumberland Infirmary

Posted on Thursday 15th December 2011

The 100<sup>th</sup> Telestroke patient has now been assessed at the Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle.

The North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust has been the lead provider in setting up the Telestroke service which launched in late July this year. It has provided a huge boost for acute stroke services across eight hospitals in Cumbria and Lancashire, increasing the number of patients getting effective stroke treatment.

A total of 17 stroke consultants including those at the Cumberland Infirmary and West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven, have come together to provide 24/7 thrombolysis treatment for patients who are displaying symptoms of an acute stroke. The consultants provide an 'out of hours' service to all acute hospitals in Cumbria and Lancashire using high speed broadband technology to remotely connect to the eight hospital sites.

Each stroke consultant is linked by broadband to a Telecart, which is positioned at the patient's bedside in A&E or in some cases the stroke unit. Consultants are able to have a 'two-way' virtual consultation, enabling them to see and speak to patients via innovative teleconferencing equipment and they can then recommend appropriate treatment.

Since the service began, there have been 16 advice calls at the Cumberland Infirmary, 17 Telestroke assessments and six patients have been thrombolysed.

In total, across the eight hospitals (Blackpool, Blackburn, Preston, Southport, Lancaster, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle and Whitehaven), there have now been 100 advice calls, 117 Telestroke assessments and 49 patients have been thrombolysed.

Dr Paul Davies, Elderly Care Consultant at the Cumberland Infirmary, has been part of a team that led the development of the service after successfully bidding in a "dragon's den" type event to secure £250,000 of NHS Regional Innovation Fund monies to pump-prime the new service.

He said: "If a patient arrives in hospital with a stroke, outside the normal working day, we can now start a Telestroke consultation. We can ask the patient questions and perform an examination with the help of the local team to decide whether the symptoms have been due to a stroke. We are also able to view the CT head scan which differentiates between a stroke caused by bleeding and a stroke caused by clots. Only after the scan can we decide whether thrombolysis treatment (the use of drugs to break up or dissolve blood clots) is appropriate."

"Thrombolysis treatment can only be given to patients within four and a half hours of the onset of their stroke so time is critical to this treatment and Telestroke will help improve the speed of patient diagnosis. The sooner treatments can be provided, the better the outcome for our patients."

## Patient feedback

Here are some of the fantastic comments hospitals have received from Telestroke patients and their families:

"Mother was too ill to know what was going on but the family took part in the consultation and we thought it was brilliant."

"I had seen the video link consultation on TV, which helped. I found the consultation like all the treatment I have received at the hospital to be quick, efficient and helpful. Thank you."

"The video consultation was very good and the consultant was very clear. I have had a stroke before and was in hospital for a week or so but with this new video consultation, I am going home after just the weekend. A big thank you to you all."



Dr Paul Davies, Elderly Care Consultant

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