

report



meeting	JOINT CITY/COUNTY HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
date	14 th DECEMBER 2004	agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

STUDY INTO THE MRSA SUPERBUG

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to initiate a new project to examine the impact of MRSA in Nottinghamshire's hospitals. It is proposed that work is undertaken by both the Joint Health Select Committee and the County Council's Health Select Committee, with the Patient Forums of Acute Trusts also being invited to assist.

Background

2. Around 5,000 people die from infections acquired in hospitals in the United Kingdom each year. The most well known is arguably methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, commonly known as the MRSA superbug. In the region of 7,000 patients are currently affected by MRSA each year in the UK. MRSA can be treated with the antibiotic vancomycin but worryingly the bacteria is becoming increasingly resistant to it. Scientists are warning that the death rate from MRSA will increase if it becomes necessary to find alternative drugs with which to treat it.
3. The Secretary of State for Health, John Reid has said that hospitals will soon be required to publish details of MRSA levels.

Aims of the Project

4. It is proposed that the aims of the project are to:
 - Determine the levels of MRSA in Nottinghamshire hospitals
 - Use Patient Forums to report on levels of cleanliness in Nottinghamshire hospitals

- Receive evidence from the appropriate experts within the Acute Trusts as to what measures are being taken in Nottinghamshire hospitals to combat MRSA
- Seek examples of best practice on how MRSA is being tackled
- Produce a 'State of MRSA in Nottinghamshire' report

Methodology

5. It is proposed that evidence gathering is allocated on the following basis:

Health Committee: to receive evidence from Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust, Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals Trust, and Primary Care Trusts as appropriate. To receive evidence from experts, the Coroner's Office and care homes. To carry out desk research as appropriate.

Joint Health Committee: to receive evidence from the Queen's Medical Centre Acute Trust and Nottingham City Hospital Acute Trust. To receive evidence from experts and desk research as appropriate.

Patient Forums: to identify work already undertaken by Patient Forums on MRSA and to request a report on standards of cleanliness in Nottinghamshire's hospitals.

RECOMMENDATION

6. It is recommended that:

the Committee endorses the MRSA superbug project scope.

Cllr Jim Napier
Chair of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

None.