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Email only

11 May 2018

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information received on 13 April 2018 in relation to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (Trust). We are dealing with your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You requested information regarding morcellators. Specifically you asked for:

1. How many gynaecologists within your organisation perform laparoscopic procedures requiring morcellation?

Answer: 2 clinicians in the Trust use power morcellation.

2. How many power morcellators do you purchase per annum for gynaecology?

Answer: In the last year we purchased 11 morcellators, but this included an element of over ordering. However, as this piece of machinery is considered 'old fashioned' the Trust is not looking to purchase anymore.

3. How many power morcellators do you use in gynaecology per annum?

Answer: 1 device used.

4. How many laparoscopic hysterectomies requiring morcellation do you perform annually?

Answer: 1 in 2017/18

Please note that the procedure code for morcellation is a new code and only came into operation from April 2017. Data covers the period April 2017-March 2018. However please note that March 2018 is not a fully coded position.

5. How many laparoscopic myomectomies requiring morcellation do you perform annually?

Answer: 0 in 2017/18

Please note that the procedure code for morcellation is a new code and only came into operation from April 2017. Data covers the period April 2017-March 2018. However please note that March 2018 is not a fully coded position.

6. For patients requiring morcellation, do you routinely perform pre-operative MRI?

Answer: Yes, the Trust does perform MRI for patients being considered for a procedure involving power morcellation.

7. For patients requiring morcellation, do you routinely perform pre-operative endometrial sampling/biopsy?

Answer: Only if clinically indicated.

8. During the consent process, do you specifically consent for power morcellation in gynaecology?

Answer: The Trust does not necessarily mention morcellation on the consent form. Consent will say Laparoscopic hysterectomy. We will reflect on this.

9. During the consent process, what risk of inadvertent leiomyosarcoma do you quote during hysterectomies/myomectomies for benign fibroids?

Answer: We morcellate in a bag. Risk of spreading a sarcoma is nil or at least not higher than an open hysterectomy or myomectomy.

10. During the consent process, what risk do quote for spread of inadvertent leiomyosarcoma from power morcellation?

Answer: Generally not because we morcellate in a bag. We put the large uterus or mass in a bag and morcellate. Risks are not known and there is no consensus in the medical world.

11. Has your organisation ever encountered inadvertent leiomyosarcoma following hysterectomy or myomectomy for presumed benign indications? If so, many?

Answer: Yes, very few, low grade sarcomas cannot always be diagnosed pre-op. The Trust's Information Department have searched for the time period specified and there are not any relevant codes under Obstetrics and Gynaecology for this subject matter.

12. Do you have information leaflet about morcellation in gynaecology?

Answer: No.

13. What audit procedures do you have in place for gynaecologists participating in power morcellation?

Answer: We have only re-started Morcellating recently after the bags became available. Numbers are small, 5-10 a year. Consultants who morcellate keep a running audit.

In line with the Information Commissioner's directive on the disclosure of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 your request will form part of our disclosure log. Therefore, a version of our response which will protect your anonymity will be posted on the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust website.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss the information supplied, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number or at the above address.

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review by writing to:

The Chief Executive
County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
Darlington Memorial Hospital
Hollyhurst Road
Darlington
DL3 6HX

If, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.gov.uk.

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Tyrrell
Freedom of Information Officer