

# The AAA Team

Newsletter of the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme



Issue 13: Produced by the NI AAA Screening Programme for HSC Professionals - Spring 2017

## Service User Event, Thursday 6th April 2017 : Still Time to Register...



For those of you who may not have seen an electronic flier inviting GPs (and other key stakeholders, as listed below) to the NI Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Programme's fifth annual **Service User Event**, there is still time to register your attendance. As in previous years, the morning workshop will take place between 9.30am - 1.00pm on **Thursday 6th April** in **Belfast Central Mission's Grosvenor Hall (Glengall Street, Belfast)**. Moreover, having opened up the event to a majority of men screen-detected with an AAA since the programme began in 2012, we are delighted that over **80 service users have so far registered** to attend. Members of the **Programme Team** (pictured left) and other

key stakeholders, including a number of our **Patient Representatives**, will also attend. Updates will be provided by the programme team on initiatives to develop and improve the programme, including progress on suggestions made by service users at last year's event. Participants will also have the opportunity to network with fellow attendees as well as putting forward more ideas for ensuring the programme continues to meet user needs. Key details on the event are outlined below. If you would like additional information, including advice on how to register, please contact: **Jacqueline McDevitt, QA Manager for the NIAAASP**, at: [jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net) or on **02895 361505**.

### Target Audience:

- **NIAAASP Service Users (men who have been screen-detected with an AAA)**
- **Wives/partners of screen-detected men**
- **Belfast HSC Trust NIAAASP Staff**
- **Public Health Agency NIAAASP Staff**
- **GPs and Practice Managers**
- **Community Pharmacists**

### 2017 Event, Key Facts:

- **Fifth annual Service User Event**
- **City centre location, morning workshop**
- **Over 80 Service Users registered so far**
- **Opportunity to talk to Service Users and Programme Providers**
- **Refreshments & lunch provided**

**Calling all GPs and Practice Staff!** If you would be interested in promoting AAA screening, or receiving more information, please contact:

**Diane Stewart, Programme Manager on:**

**02890 638256** or at [diane.stewart@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:diane.stewart@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

## Programme Research and Development

Primary Care teams are integral to the successful delivery of the NI AAA Screening Programme. Since the programme began in 2012, your considerable contribution and partnership working has been invaluable in facilitating specific pieces of work such as the research initiative outlined below. Dr Armstrong's study (co-authored with A Maguire, D Bradley, A Mairs, D O'Reilly and F Kee) considers the impact of AAA Screening, and the intervention of primary care, on the use of medications to reduce cardiovascular risk.

### 'AAA Screening in NI increases prescribing of preventative cardiovascular medication for men diagnosed with small – medium AAAs'

*G Armstrong, A Maguire, D Bradley, A Mairs, D O'Reilly, F Kee*

#### Background

Men diagnosed with abdominal aortic aneurysms are at significant risk of cardiovascular events such as stroke and ischaemic heart disease. Research in England and Wales suggests that this risk is not addressed sufficiently. The AAA Screening Programme in Northern Ireland has diagnosed hundreds of men with small-medium aneurysms. The aim of this project was to determine if these men are being prescribed medications to reduce their risk of cardiovascular events.



Dr Gillian Armstrong, PHA

#### Methods

Datasets were linked from the NI AAA Screening Programme and the Enhanced Prescribing Database. All men were included who were invited for AAA screening between 2012-2014 (n=24,278). We compared prescription of medications to reduce cardiovascular risk before and after screening, including: anti-platelets, statins and anti-hypertensives. Statistical analysis was performed to determine the likelihood of prescription of these medications for the men.

#### Results

Diagnosis with a small-medium aneurysm increased statin prescribing by 26% and anti-platelet prescribing by 50%. This relationship was even stronger in men who were not on any medications prior to screening. There was no significant change in prescription of cardiovascular medications for men who did not attend screening or for men with no aneurysm.

#### Conclusion

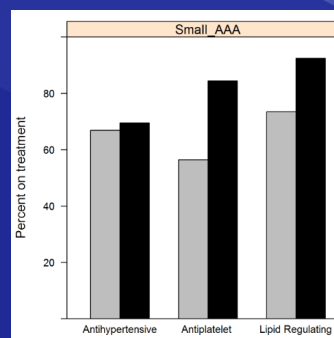
Attending NIAAASP increases the likelihood that men diagnosed with small to medium AAAs are commenced on CV risk-reducing medication. AAA screening may provide an opportunity to address CV risk factors for a high risk group.

Dr Gillian Armstrong, along with members of the AAA Screening Programme Team, recently attended the **NHS England AAA Screening Programme's Audit and Research Day on 28th February in Leicester** and presented this work. Dr Damien Bennett (a Specialist Registrar in Public Health) also attended this meeting and presented a piece of work he has recently completed on visualisation of the aorta.



Improving Your Health and Wellbeing

Proportion of men diagnosed with a small-medium AAA on CV medication before and after screen



Grey – before screen. Black – after screen.

**Key contacts: Belfast H&SC Trust**

**Programme Mgr:** Ms Diane Stewart, 02890 638256

**Key contacts: PHA**

**QA Manager:** Mrs Jacqueline McDevitt, 02890 311611

## In the News - 'How AAA screening and treatment saved my life...'

Local newspapers recently featured an article on **Brian Topping and his wife Naomi**. This was after Brian received a routine initial screening invitation to attend for a scan at his local screening clinic. The scan revealed that Brian had a large abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), and he was immediately referred to the Vascular Team at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to discuss his treatment options. Following successful surgery Brian is now fully recovered and enjoying a normal, active life once again.

### Video

A video, produced with the kind cooperation of Brian and Naomi subsequent to Brian's return to full health, is now available on the AAA

Screening Programme website at [www.aaascreening.info](http://www.aaascreening.info). In the video Brian recounts his experience of attending AAA screening and being diagnosed with an aneurysm over 5.5cm. Having had no previous symptoms, and no idea that anything was wrong, Brian explains how, following prompt treatment and a period of recuperation, he is relieved that life is back to normal. The video lasts for just over six minutes and complements the programme's existing two videos which cover what life is like living with a small AAA (featuring John McElkerney), and an overview of the screening programme (delivered by Mr Paul Blair, the programme's Clinical Lead).



Naomi and Brian Topping with Gill Swain (right), Vascular Nurse Specialist, at the 2015 Service User Event



### Social Media Coverage

Communication colleagues at the PHA, who were instrumental in the production of the new video, also took the opportunity of promoting Brian and Naomi's story via social media. Messaging around Brian's story and the video was also published on Facebook, reaching 7,305 people, with 2,700 views of the video. The post got 27 likes and 27 shares. Our thanks to Gary McKeown, Communications Manager, and his colleagues for their help and input.

If you would like further details on any of the media coverage of Brian's story, please contact Jacqueline McDevitt at:

[jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net)

### Existing Information Sources for GPs

Information on the NI AAA Screening Programme is available in the following formats via the website or by contacting **Jacqueline McDevitt** directly on **02890 311611** or e-mailing [jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net)

**GP Information Pack** | **GP Awareness Presentations** | **Promotional Materials** | **Copies or E copies of our newsletter 'The AAA Team'** | **Screening Invite leaflet 'AAA Screening : Things you need to know'** | **Leaflets for men under surveillance for small, medium or large AAAs**

## New Faces...



### Public Health Lead: Dr Stephen Bergin

Dr Bergin is a consultant in public health medicine who has recently taken over from Dr Adrian Mairs as regional public health lead for the screening programme within the PHA. He has been impressed by the success of the programme, particularly in terms of the number of men with previously undetected aneurysms who, through screening, benefit each year from early detection and early intervention thereafter. Dr Bergin's task is to ensure the programme continues to meet its aims and objectives while pursuing ongoing improvement and development overall.



### Administrator:

#### Paul Fusco

Paul is the first point of contact for the AAA screening programme, dealing with queries from men, GPs and others on a daily basis. His main duties include processing invitations, sending out result letters to men and their GPs, and maintaining various data systems relating to the programme.



### Deputy Programme Manager:

#### Ms Sarah-Louise Dornan

Sarah-Louise works with Diane (Programme Manager) on a daily basis to manage the day-to-day work of the programme, including supporting the administration team to ensure the programme office runs smoothly.



### Trainee Screening Technician:

#### Paul Goodyear

Paul is currently completing accredited training to become a screening technician. Screening technicians carry out ultrasound scanning of the abdominal aorta on a daily basis. They are responsible for explaining the scan and implications of AAA screening to the men and informing them of their result at the end of the appointment.

### Headline Data

**Over 40,000 men screened** since the programme started

**643 AAAs detected** to date

**92 men referred** to the Vascular service with a large AAA

**2,926 self-referrals** to the programme since it started

**1.7% prevalence** rate for 2015/16

**83% uptake** rate for 2015/16

### GPs and Practice Staff!

**Don't forget SELF-REFERRAL...**

**Men over 65, who have never been for AAA Screening, can ask to be screened by calling the Programme Office on:**

**02890 631828**

For more information on the programme, visit our **WEBSITE** at:

**[www.aaascreening.info](http://www.aaascreening.info)**