

The AAA Team

Newsletter of the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme



Issue 6: Produced by the NI AAA Screening Programme for HSC Professionals - SUMMER 2013

NI AAA Screening Programme Celebrates Its First Birthday



The Northern Ireland Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme celebrated its first birthday on the 18th June 2013. A year ago, the programme was introduced to reduce AAA-related mortality by providing a systematic, population-based screening programme for men in the year they turn 65 and, on request, for men over 65. During this time there have been significant achievements within the programme, and ongoing development of the service, to ensure men continue to benefit from easily accessible and high quality screening. To help celebrate the achievement, this edition of the newsletter focuses on key stages of the programme as it has evolved - and continues to do so - by providing updates on:

- **Successful promotional events over the last twelve months (see below)**
- **Our new website at www.aaascreening.info**
- **Men benefitting from the programme**
- **Personal & Public Involvement & screening locations**

In addition, key data (see p2) for the first year of the programme demonstrate particularly encouraging uptake rates and that the programme is meeting key national quality assurance standards.

Balmoral Show, May 2013

Programme Manager, Diane Stewart (below left) & Jacqueline McDevitt, QA & Commissioning Support Manager, with Health Minister, Edwin Poots at this year's Balmoral Show to promote AAA screening in Northern Ireland.

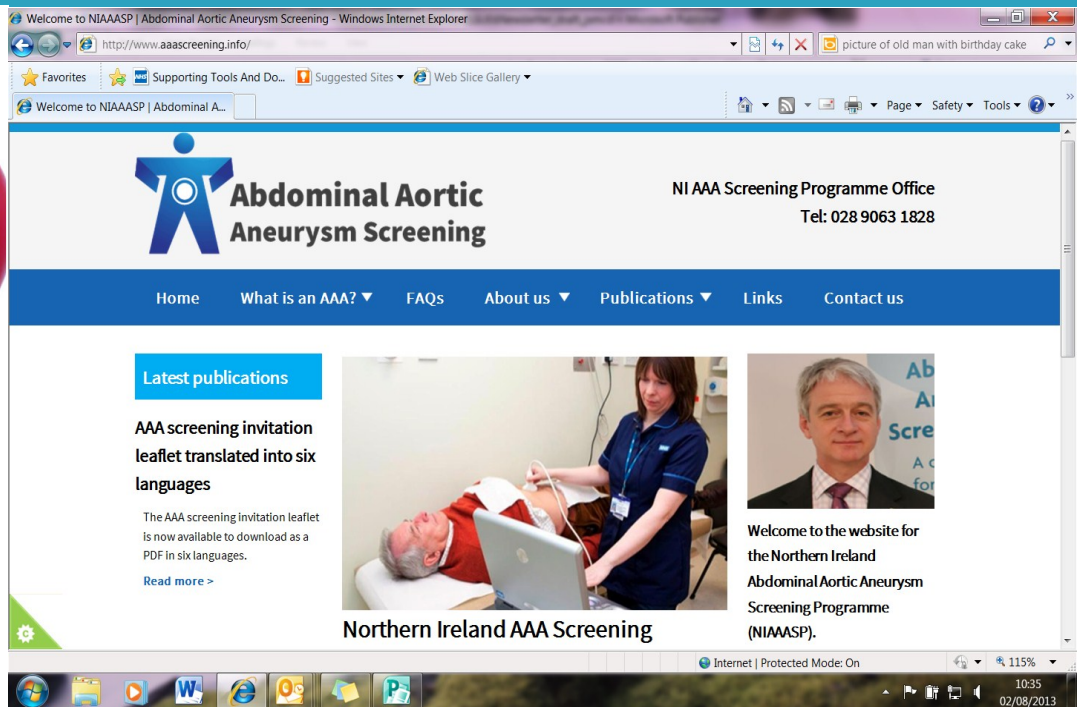


Parliamentary Reception, June 2013

Dr Adrian Mairs (Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme Lead, above far right) with **Mr Mike Harris** (second right, Communications Lead for the English AAA Screening Programme), **Mr Sam Ellicott**, (far left) and **Mr Alan Huw Smith** (second left) in the Strangers' Dining Room, Westminster. The event was held to mark full roll-out and celebrate the official launch of the English AAA Screening Programme, with which the NI AAA Screening Programme is closely linked. Mr Ellicott, who spoke at the reception, had a large AAA detected on initial scan and repaired by open surgery. Mr Smith had an EVAR repair after having an AAA monitored for several years by the Gloucestershire programme before it reached referral size and required treatment.

We welcome feedback on this newsletter. Please contact jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net or ring 02890 311611 if you have suggestions for articles in future editions.

Home page of new Website at: www.aascreening.info



Launch of NI AAA Screening Programme Website

The Screening Programme celebrated its first full year of screening across Northern Ireland with the launch of a new public information website (to complement the programme's existing presence on the PHA corporate website www.publichealth.hscni.net).

The website aims to provide a wide variety of information on what an AAA is, the screening programme, who the programme is aimed at and options for management of screen-detected AAAs. Information is available in a variety of formats including easy-read, translations and audio and video. The site can be found at www.aascreening.info.

Headline Data

By the end of June 2013, the 2012/2013 cohort results were:

Uptake rate:	81%
Screen detected AAAs:	74
Prevalence rate:	1.4%

The screening year ran from 1st July 2012 to 31st March 2013. All men in Northern Ireland who turned 65 during this time were offered a screening appointment by the end of March (6,802 men). Nine men were also screened within the Prison setting while 327 men who self-referred were also screened. Screening of men from the 2013/2014 cohort was also well underway by 1st April 2013.

Calling all GPs!! Don't forget SELF-REFERRAL...

Men over 65, who have never attended for AAA Screening, can ask to be screened by contacting the Programme Office on: **02890 631828**



Sharing Experiences: Living with an AAA...

David & Helen McIntyre



David McIntyre is a fit and healthy 65 year-old retired post-man from Lurgan. David had an aneurysm detected after attending for screening and is calling for other men to seriously consider their invite also.

David (left, with wife Helen) explains: "At the start of February 2013 I received a letter from the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme inviting me to attend a screening appointment on 11 February at Lurgan Hospital."

David was unsure whether to attend for screening or not: "I was in two minds whether to go to this screening but was persuaded by my wife Helen to get the scan done, saying 'What harm could it do?', so I went along on the Monday morning. I was shown into the scanning room where the two friendly screening technicians explained the procedure to me. The test was simple and pain-free. Some gel was applied to my abdomen and the ultrasound scanner was moved across my abdomen. The screening technician explained what she was doing and checked with me to make sure I was OK at all times."

The scan showed that David had a small aneurysm. As most AAAs grow very slowly, men with a small or medium AAA may never develop a large AAA, but will be monitored to see if it grows. David continued: "Immediately after the scan I was told by the technician that I had a small aortic aneurysm. She gave me some information leaflets and said at this stage I only needed to be monitored. They also notified my GP with the results of the scan. I was reassured that at least now I know about the aneurysm and that it will be monitored to help prevent it becoming fatal."

Aubrey & Irene Crawford

'It is a must to attend; I feel my life has been saved and hopefully extended. Since my surgery I have heard so many stories regarding other men – some of whom have died, and others whose aneurysms have burst. Yes, you may need surgery if an aneurysm is detected, but the alternative is unthinkable'

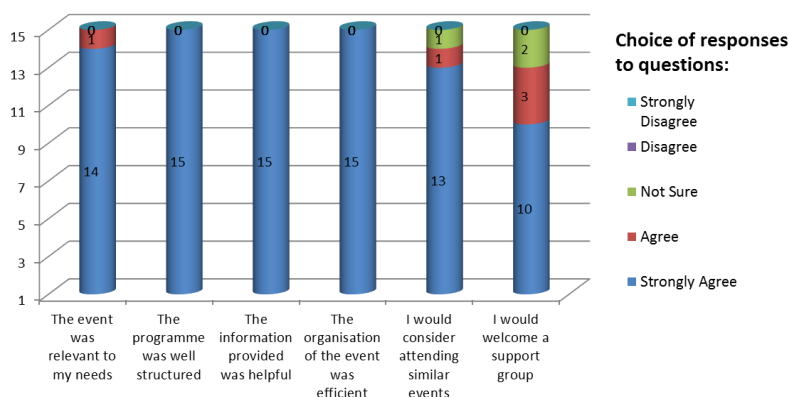
Aubrey & Irene (right) at the inaugural Men's Health Event held in April 2013 where men - who have benefitted from the programme - were invited to come along and share their experiences with programme staff to help shape future improvements.



The NI AAA Screening Programme: Men's Screening Event, April 2013

Summary of Mens/Wives/Companions' Responses to Event

15 surveys returned



Six questions asked in survey (above):

Update on Screening Locations

The programme has increased its choice of screening venues from 16 (in June 2012) to 19 in recent months. Listed below is a full range of locations where men can be screened with the newest facilities highlighted in green. If you think you could help with identifying additional suitable venues please contact **Ms Diane Stewart** at the screening office on: **02890 638256**

Screening Locations

Ards Out of Hours GP
Beech Hall Centre
Bessbrook Clinic
 Bradbury Medical Practice
 Braid Valley Hospital
 Causeway Hospital
 Downe Hospital
 Grove Wellbeing Centre
 Holywood Arches Health Centre
 Kilkeel Primary Care Centre
 Lurgan Day Hospital
 Mid Ulster Hospital
 Moyle Hospital
 Mullinure Day Hospital
 Portadown Health Centre
 South Tyrone Hospital
 South West Acute Hospital
 Tyrone County Hospital
 Waterside Health Centre

Feedback from the Men's Health Event, held on Thursday 25th April, has been positive and thought-provoking. The event was organised and facilitated by all members of the AAA Screening Programme Team, based at both the Public Health Agency and Belfast Trust. The chart above summarises the responses of men and their wives/companions to the event itself, which was considered very worthwhile. During the event, all participants were also asked to consider, and debate with programme providers, the following questions:

- What is good about the programme?
- What could be improved?
- What has been my own experience of AAA screening?

Two key findings emerged, following analysis of responses:

- That in general the screening and treatment service is meeting the needs of men.
- That additional information and support is needed for men while in hospital and following discharge after surgery.

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