

Blog: 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022

We are slowly coming to terms with losing Dr Mick: even last week when I received news of a serious diagnosis in one of his patients I have been looking after, my immediate reaction was to ring Mick as he would want to know... It has not been easy on us, in particular the two nurses who worked closely with him and I want to thank all our patients who have been so supportive in understanding the grief we have too.

Drs Dominic Smith and Andrew Chew are doing a fine job looking after his patients, while I continue to look after those who choose to come to me. I know I always say it, but in our surgery patients are welcome to see any of our doctors. I know this is not the case always elsewhere. Convenience is a reasonable reason: one of us might have an appointment available that fits with your schedule. And if you want to a simple "Please can you let Dr.... know" ensures another doctor knows quickly what needs to be communicated about a follow up or new diagnosis. We have tools built into our software to facilitate this. One is a screen message straight to the other doctor's computer that can relay a short message eg "Please see notes about ...". Another is a toolbar prompt where we park tasks to do eg "Refer to Gen Surg MMH once Abdominal USS to hand" which starts flashing annoyingly after the time allotted until attended to. In these situations it might say "Talk with Dr JA to see if there are other options for care in ...."

Although she is only with us on Fridays Dr Ranche is starting to build up a group of patients who prefer to see her, so of course on the other days of the week when they need medical care they have to see another one of us, and we communicate this to Ranche as needed.

This coming week I go on Rest and Recuperation leave to two weeks. I just plan on chilling out, reading books and living on toasted sandwiches. No-one else to care for but me. After this year, and handling the extra load the pandemic caused, I have hit the wall finally. I need to step back and recharge. But as I have said, I am very proud of the way our surgery has managed the last few years and provided ongoing, continuous care to our patients, never closing down, and being available in a timely manner to all our patients when they needed us. It definitely isn't just me, but the large and wonderful team I work with.

Dr Lance O'Sullivan I am sure is a very suitable replacement over these two weeks. We care about the same thing, providing quality care to all our patients. And without his kind offer to supervise the practice, we may have needed to close this fortnight because without a holiday for nearly two years I couldn't keep going. It's recoup and reboot time.

The pandemic is slowly burning out. From a high of 30+ new affected patients a day we are down to as little as 2 or 3. Our Covid-19 vaccination clinic on Fridays is due to close as the number of those who want boosters is dropping to levels whereby it is hard to manage the 7-dose vaccine phials without wastage. While the spring weather brings pollens in vast quantities and hayfever, the virus season is tailing off too. A lot more came over the Border when it came down than just Sars-Covid-19. Wearing decent masks indoors-including up over the nose and fitting snugly to enable easy breathing thru the mask - is still the way to go to avoid all those heavy head colds and Influenza. The latter still has moderate size aerosol droplets so hand sanitising is an important way to prevent Influenza spreading, so don't let up on these basic precautions if you wish to avoid getting sick.

We are organising catchup smear clinics. Those overdue for smears will get a phone text about when these are available. Please keep us updated if you change telephone number or email. Nurses are always available for all immunisations, including measles in that vulnerable 15-30 years age group who only got baby jabs. Also for grandparents around new bubs for whooping cough, and

the 45 year and 65yr tetanus which is rarely publicised. Just ring and book directly with the nurses. And for those travelling overseas, look up the CDC website for information as to what is needed for the countries you are visiting. That is Centre of Disease Control, Atlanta Georgia USA. All immunisations can be done by our nurses except yellow fever which is only through a few of the Travel Medicine Doctors.

Be safe, be well, Jacqueline on behalf of the entire team at Tiakina Te Ora.