

Developing a plan to establish a women's clinic including sexual health

*in Collaboration with
Victor Babeş Infectious Diseases Hospital
in Timișoara (Romania)*

16-17 February 2017



List of people who attended the meeting

Dr. Voichita Lazureanu Associate Professor/ Lecturer, Victor Babeş Infectious Diseases Hospital, Timișoara, Romania

Dana Biris, Psychologist, Victor Babeş Infectious Diseases Hospital, Timișoara, Romania

Dr. Ovidiu Rosca, Doctor (Infectious Diseases), Victor Babeş Infectious Diseases Hospital, Timișoara, Romania

Louie Pong, Clinical Nurse Specialist (Sexual Health), Royal Free London NHS Trust, London.

Dr. Sapna Shah, Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Barnet Hospital.

Thembi Moyo, Clinical Nurse Specialist (HIV/Sexual and Women's Health), Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust

Sophie Strachan, Health Adviser.



JUSTRI meeting report

A JUSTRI visit to Timișoara, Romania for the meeting and planning of establishing women's clinic service including sexual health was organised in collaboration with the Victor Babeș Infectious Diseases Hospital in Timișoara (Romania). The people in attendance included an associate professor, specialist doctors, specialist nurses, a psychologist, and a health adviser from Timișoara and London.

The meeting included discussions, planning, and guided tour of the hospital where we met other staff and patients. The topics covered in the meeting/ discussions included organisational/ political structure of the hospital, funding, start up, existing services available both on and off site, logistics of test samples, professional responsibilities/ staffing, possibility of training the nurses to perform the procedures, and collaboration with other doctors (gynaecologist).

It has been noted at the beginning of the meeting that opening a new service in Victor Babeș Infectious Diseases Hospital, Timișoara, Romania would involve presenting/ approval of a business plan to the Mayor, then to the Ministry of Health then to the Hospital, and it could take 3 years or more to make the change in the current structure.

Cervical Screening

It has been noted that the cervical screening programme for HIV+ve women already exists but the uptake was/is low due to the STIGMA of being HIV+ve and are reluctant to go to other clinic as well.

Funding

It has been discussed that the funding/ tariff comes from the main national insurance and is a fixed amount regardless of the number of patients been seen. There is a possibility of acquiring funding if there is a dedicated gynaecologist willing to work on site in the hospital even on a part time basis.

Recommendations and Planning

Recommendations were made by the group on the next steps after this meeting. It is still a possibility for a 'start-up' service to happen in the hospital. Points were noted down as follows:

- ✧ There is **no facility for Pap smear** in the laboratory and it has no experience /expertise/ accreditation. However, the hospital may acquire a binding contract with another hospital or other laboratories around the region noting the costs involved (logistics of transporting specimens between labs)
- ✧ **Purchasing a machine** is also an option for on-site tests.
- ✧ Possibility the **on-site gynaecologist** will manage the patient once referred by the infectious disease doctor.
- ✧ Currently, the hospital is only interpreting the Pap smear result via slides/ microscopy. The plan is to **liaise with the gynaecologists** if they will agree to process the samples/ specimens from the HIV+ve cohort. Around +/-371 of women are in the county out of +/- 1000 cohort.
- ✧ Also to request the possibility of having a dedicated clinical session for the gynaecologist to be based at the Victor Babeş Infectious Diseases Hospital to perform Smear testing for HIV+ve women once a week.
- ✧ It has been discussed that the collaboration with the gynaecologist is not a problem **taking small steps at a time** from the beginning (i.e. 10 tests per month).
- ✧ To ask the **local laboratory** if they have the necessary skills to process the sample.
- ✧ Once the service is running, can evaluate and possibility of **producing data** and presentation for future meetings and developments of the service.
- ✧ There is also the possibility of a **nurse to be trained** how to take the swabs for smear/STI testing in future.

Conclusion

All professionals have been positive with the project and contributed well in the discussions. The JUSTRI group (facilitated by Sophie Strachan) has also met some of the HIV+ve women in Timișoara who shared their personal experiences both positive and negative (including obstacles in accessing any health care in the region).

Further discussion between Dr Ovidiu Rosca and Louie Pong, Dr Ovidiu thought it might be best to apply a grant for funding by applying this project as 'research based' rather than a 'new service' which can take some time to be approved/not approved at the government/ political level.