

Trust Chief Executives

31 July 2017

Dear Colleagues

Management of women experiencing complications following vaginal mesh surgery.

You may be aware of the recent media publicity regarding the problems women encounter following vaginal mesh surgery. Two reports have been issued on the subject this year from Scotland (March 2017) <http://www.gov.scot/About/Review/Transvaginal-Mesh-Implants> and England (July 2017) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/mesh-oversight-group-report/>.

Mesh surgery is used to treat stress urinary incontinence (SUI) and pelvic organ prolapse (POP). For many women suffering the distressing symptoms of SUI and POP, surgical procedures using mesh devices have provided an effective form of treatment which are less invasive than alternative surgical procedures. There is published evidence to suggest improved outcomes for procedures using mesh over the periods studied, but complications are also recognised. However the period of follow up in these studies is limited. Although published research suggests the risk of complications from surgery using mesh falls within acceptable limits, an increasing number of women have reported complications, sometimes many years after their surgery. For some patients the complications can be severe and life-altering.

I have attached a copy of a letter which is being sent to all GPs in N Ireland. They have been advised that if they encounter any woman experiencing problems after vaginal mesh surgery they should be referred back to the Trust where the surgery was performed and the referral letter should state that the woman is being referred because of problems associated with mesh surgery. Trusts should have arrangements in place for these women to be seen promptly by a consultant with an interest in urogynaecology.

I would ask you to ensure that your Trust has clear arrangements in place for patients referred by GPs with problems post vaginal mesh surgery to ensure they are seen by a consultant with an interest in urogynaecology. A clinical workshop will be held on the 11th September 2017 to finalise a regional consent form, regional information leaflet and ensure consistent use of the national database for vaginal mesh surgery to record information on all women who have these procedures.

Your co-operation with these arrangements is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Valerie Watts
Chief Executive

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