

28 August 2018

Our ref: FOI/18480

Jackie Harvey

Dear Ms Harvey

RE: Mesh removal

I refer to your Freedom of Information (FOI) request received 30 July 2018.
Please find below the details you requested. I hope this information is helpful.

1. The names of surgeons who have been trained in Belfast Trust (Urogynaecologists, gynaecologists, urologists)

There are 2 consultants urogynaecologists (Dr Patrick Campbell, Dr Lucia Dolan) and 1 consultant urologist (Ms Siobhan Woolsey) who have been trained in the management of complex urogynaecology and in female pelvic floor reconstructive surgery including management of mesh complications.

2. Exactly what training they received (was it hands on, practical training? Was it for incontinence Meshes only or also for prolapse meshes?)

Two urogynaecology consultants have completed RCOG accredited subspecialty training programmes:

<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/careers-training/specialty-training-curriculum/subspecialty-training/urogynaecology-subspecialty-training/> and 1 consultant urologist completed the British Association Urological Surgeons curriculum including surgical management of female lower urinary tract symptoms and pelvic floor reconstructive surgery. Surgeons have been certified as having successfully completed the curricula which includes hands on surgical competence in using continence and prolapse mesh and in the surgical management of mesh complications. Additional training has been acquired through clinical and research fellowships in urology and urogynaecology programmes. Surgeons participate in scientific research and actively engage with international experts in the field as part of continual professional development.

To give details of specific training received by each Surgeon would be information held on their Personnel File. This is therefore exempt from release under Section 40(2) – Personal Information Relating to a Third Person.

3. When did this training take place? How long was the training?

Surgeons have been trained under RCOG accredited programmes since 2004. They participate in scientific research and actively engage with international experts in the field as part of continual professional development.

RCOG accredited programmes were of 2 and 3 years in duration; clinical research fellowships -12 months.

To give dates of specific training received by each Surgeon would be Personal Information to them and exempt from release under Section 40(2) – Personal Information Relating to a Third Person.

4. Who trained them and where this training took place?

RCOG recognised trainers in Sheffield, Manchester and Newcastle upon Tyne were responsible for training surgeons during RCOG accredited training programmes. In addition, consultants have collaborated with other specialists in the UK and Europe.

5. Any details of follow up or mentorship after training by an experienced mesh removal surgeon elsewhere who has overseen any subsequent removals carried out by these newly trained surgeons to quality assure their work and ensure women are not being put at risk

Surgeons are members of BSUG and BAUS respectively and international and urogynaecology and urology societies. They participate in scientific research and actively engage with international experts in the field as part of continual professional development.

6. Can you advise how many TOTAL and COMPLETE removals of TVT, TVTO, TOT and all types of prolapse Meshes have been removed by the following and during what time frame these were done 1.Lucia Dolan 2. Patrick Campbell 3. Siobhan Woolsley 4. Agnieszka Zawislak

We have reviewed hospital coding records (2014-2018), including manual trawl of theatre ledgers and personal records and estimate that the three consultants who are members of the mesh team have to date performed:

- Up to 10 complete removals of TVT
- 9 complete removals of vaginal mesh tapes (TVT, TVTO) and prolapse mesh (No groin dissection for removal of TVTO. No removal of arms of prolapse mesh.)
- at least 10 removals of mesh that has completely eroded into the urethra
- an unspecified number of minor vaginal mesh revision operations to remove parts of vaginal mesh.

To break these figures down to individual Surgeons would make it Personal Information and therefore exempt under Section 40(2) – Personal Information Relating to a Third Person.

7. Can you also confirm if any of these surgeons have been trained in COMPLETE and FULL Removal of vaginal mesh and if so HOW and WHEN they were trained

See responses to questions 2,3,4,5.

8. If any other surgeon in your trust has received such training can you confirm this and provide their names?

No other surgeons have received similar length and breadth of training included within the subspecialty training curriculum.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which your Freedom of Information (FOI) request has been handled you may wish to complain. You should contact Mrs Edel O'Sullivan, External Communication Manager, Nore Villa, Knockbracken Health Care Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast BT8 8BH or alternatively e-mail:

edel.osullivan@belfasttrust.hscni.net within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided usually within 20 working days of receipt.

Should you still be dissatisfied with the outcome, you can proceed to the second review stage by contacting the Information Commissioner, The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF who will undertake an independent review. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's review process to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you require any further information or wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clark Turner'.

Clark Turner
Public Liaison Services Officer