

TO:- All GP's in Northern Ireland
GP OOH Providers

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31st July 2017

Dear Colleagues

Re: 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, one from Scotland (March 2017):

<http://www.gov.scot/About/Review/Transvaginal-Mesh-Implants>

and one from 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 suggested 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.

This letter is to clarify arrangements in Northern Ireland. If any of your patients present 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 patient is being referred because of problems associated with mesh surgery. Individual Trusts should have arrangements in place for these women to be seen by a consultant with an interest in urogynaecology.

Your co-operation with these arrangements is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Dr Margaret O'Brien
Head of GMS