



PRESS RELEASE

No: 613/2019

Date: 21st August 2019

Gibraltar Health Authority Carries out its first Spinal Surgery

Patients with a painful spine condition can now be treated in Gibraltar, thanks to a new surgical service launched by the Gibraltar Health Authority (GHA).

Previously, patients and their families had to travel to the UK for the surgery. By offering the service in Gibraltar, patients no longer need to make the uncomfortable journey or endure the inconvenience of an extended stay overseas.

The first patient who had the spinal procedure was able to return home with their family the next day. The new surgical procedure is called a percutaneous vertebroplasty. It is the recommended treatment for patients with severe, painful fractures of the spine due to osteoporosis. It also used for patients with painful tumours in the spine.

The procedure is carried out by a specialist doctor and radiologist. A spinal surgeon injects a special bone cement into the spine to help reduce the pain and strengthen the fracture site. After the procedure, patients can move around much more easily and suffer less discomfort. The GHA's spinal team consists of Dr Kamil Baczynski (Associate Specialist, Orthopaedics) Ms Angelique Fortuna (Lead Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist) and Ms Sarah Menez (Orthopaedic Clinic Nurse). The team have been working with Mr Matthew Crocker, a visiting Neurosurgeon from St George's Hospital in London. The GHA is working closely with Mr Crocker to identify other spinal surgical procedures that may potentially be carried out in Gibraltar.

Percutaneous vertebroplasty is one of many procedures repatriated to Gibraltar in recent years. Other services include thyroid surgery, bariatric surgery, foot and ankle surgery and some vascular surgery and urology procedures.

GHA Medical Director Daniel Cassaglia said: "We are delighted to introduce this new service, which allows patients to receive the same high quality procedure, but much closer to home. This is more convenient for patients and allows them to return home sooner, which is far better for their recovery."

Minister for Health, Care and Justice, the Honourable Neil F. Costa MP added: "I am very pleased that we have repatriated yet another surgical service. The repatriation of services is of benefit to our patients and their relatives by removing the need to travel abroad to receive medical

Ministry of Health, Care and Justice

HM Government of Gibraltar • Zone 1, Level 7 St Bernard's Hospital, Harbour Views Road • Gibraltar GX11 1AA

t +350 20007011 (Centrex 2027) f +350 20059942 e ministry@gha.gi w gibraltar.gov.gi



treatments. That more services are offered locally serve to enable our clinicians and nursing staff to develop their skill set further. I would like to sincerely thank Dr Cassaglia and the spinal team for their excellent work in establishing this new service.”