

ITEM: 10/104
Doc: 05

Meeting: Trust Board
Date: 22 September 2010

Title: Introduction of MRI Coroner's Post Mortems at The Whittington Hospital

Executive Summary: This paper is to inform Trust Board and to seek its approval for a new service provision within the Imaging Department of MRI post mortems, which could possibly result in media interest.

The Whittington Hospital provides a community focussed service to its diverse population and is well respected within the community. The Coroners and Justice Bill, which was given Royal Assent in November 2009 specifically addresses implementation of an MRI post mortem as a possible alternative to an invasive post mortem in certain cases. The mortuary services manager has been approached by religious leaders of both the Jewish and Muslim faiths to request that the Whittington Hospital provide such a service for their communities

An MRI post mortem service would be provided for specific cases under the authorisation of the local coroner , Dr Andrew Reid, who is aware that the Trust is considering the introduction of this service and gives his full support.

The aim of an MRI service is to try and determine, on the balance of probabilities, a legitimate cause of death that would be acceptable to the Coroner in order to avoid an invasive investigation. A report documenting the cause of death would be provided to the Coroner by the beginning of the next working day by the Radiologist. Costs for Coroners MRI post mortems would be reimbursed to the Trust directly.

The local Jewish and Muslim communities have been receiving this service in other establishments for a number of years but would welcome this Trust offering a similar service locally for their deceased.

Press coverage of this subject nationally has attracted significant interest and there is a possibility that further demand may come from families that request an MRI post mortem based on objections to invasive investigation other than for religious reasons.

The scans will be done on the MRI scanner in the Imaging Department out of hours when there are no patients in the department. We have met with both the Muslim and Jewish religious leaders who have experience of this service, and who have advised us on setting it up.

This is a valuable service at a time of distress for relatives of the deceased who object to an invasive post mortem on either religious or ethical grounds and we would wish to start it at the beginning of October. It is possible it could attract media attention, thus the view of the Trust Board is sought.

Action:	Information and approval
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Report from:	Caroline Allum Deputy Medical Director
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Sponsor:	Rob Larkman CEO
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