

Consideration of Petition PE1408

Response from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Petition by Mrs Andrea MacArthur calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review and overhaul the current out-dated and ineffective method of diagnosing and treating Pernicious Anaemia/Vitamin B12 Deficiency.

What are your views on the issues raised in the petition and during the discussion of the petition?

The expert opinions of two consultant haematologists within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde were sought regarding this petition.

The consultants agree that the issues raised in the petition do not merit a review by the Scottish Government to overhaul the current methods of diagnosing and treating pernicious anaemia/vitamin B12 deficiency.

Within Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and indeed across Scotland, GPs and hospital consultants follow the same principles for managing patients presenting with signs and symptoms suggestive of PA/B12 deficiency. The current diagnostic tests and treatment are considered by the medical profession to be up to date, accurate and evidence based. There is no question that the current diagnostic methods are 'outdated or unreliable'.

The applicant gives a most unusual description of symptoms and response to treatment which cannot be explained by the knowledge of vitamin B12 metabolism at a scientific level. Therefore, this may place doubts on the diagnosis and by implication, the applicability of treatment to other patients. Although B12 injections are inexpensive, this does not justify promotion of their use out with the prescribing formulary.

What guidance do you issue to hospitals and general practitioners in relation to the diagnosis and treatment of Vitamin B12 deficiency and Pernicious Anaemia?

Within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde detailed information on the diagnosis and treatment of PA/Vitamin B12 deficiency is available to both GPs and hospital doctors within the 'Department of Haematology User Handbook for GPs' and the 'Handbook for Laboratory Users'. These documents are updated regularly. A letter was issued to all GPs in the Board area recently giving advice regarding B12 investigations. GPs can also obtain advice by contacting consultant haematologists within hospitals.