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PRESS RELEASE

Heart unit shortlisted for top nursing award

A new cardiac unit at Russells Hall Hospital which has transformed patient care has been shortlisted for a major national nursing award.

The Cardiac Assessment Unit (CAU) is up for a gong in the Emergency and Critical Care category at the prestigious Nursing Times Awards 2019. Since being set up in November, it has greatly reduced the time patients wait to be seen, reduced admissions and led to early diagnosis of several heart attacks.

CAU is a specialist area near the Emergency Department run by cardiac nurse specialists and supported by the on-call cardiology consultant/registrar. It sees patients with chest pain and a low to intermediate suspicion of having an acute coronary syndrome (ACS), or other cardiac conditions where patients are ambulant, such as newly-discovered atrial fibrillation (AF) or other cardiac arrhythmias (heart rhythm problems).

Previously these patients could end up waiting several hours to be seen, which could lead to a late diagnosis of ACS or myocardial infarction – a heart attack. Now these patients all get seen within an hour – the current average is 30 minutes - by a specialist nurse, are monitored on telemetry, get their blood tests done in a timely manner and are all discussed with a cardiologist. Their average stay is about four hours.

The unit has led to the early diagnosis of several heart attacks, the outpatient management of many arrhythmias that historically would have seen the patient admitted to hospital, and the safe discharge of the majority of patients, many with further outpatient tests.

Interim chief nurse Mary Sexton said: “I’m delighted that the team in CAU has been recognised for the tremendous work they are doing in improving patient care. We set up the unit as a trial and it has really proved its worth. To be shortlisted for such a prestigious award is very well deserved, and I wish them luck.”

The Nursing Times Awards recognise those making nursing an innovative, patient-focused and inclusive profession, and highlight excellence in a wide range of nursing specialties. The awards ceremony takes place on 30th October in London.

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