The Bone Infection Unit, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford, UK

The Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (NOC) is a specialist orthopaedic hospital and part of the Oxford University Hospitals (OUH) NHS Trust. The Bone Infection Unit (Blu) at the NOC is dedicated to the investigation and treatment of all aspects of bone and joint infection, including chronic long-bone osteomyelitis, diabetic foot infections, spinal infections and orthopaedic device-related infection. The centre of activity of the unit is a 24-bed dedicated inpatient ward. Each patient is under the combined care of a consultant infection physician (and trainees) and a specialist orthopaedic surgeon (and trainees). Plastic surgeons are often involved. There is a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) that includes a tissue viability nurse, Ilizarov nurse, dietician, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and home iv nurses. There is a large outpatient parenteral antibiotic therapy (OPAT) programme. The Blu runs consultant ward rounds, multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, radiology MDT meetings, a weekly combined orthopaedic / infection / plastics outpatient clinic and an OPAT clinic. There is close liaison with infection control.

Guidelines: The unit is involved with national and international guidelines on the diagnosis and management of bone and joint infections (including IDSA, NICE).

Meetings & Education: There are regular ward-based medical student and observer attachments. The unit presents the Oxford Bone Infection Conference (OBIC) each year for microbiologists / ID physicians, orthopaedic and plastic surgeons, and nursing and allied health staff.

See www.obic.org.uk & www.hartleytaylor.co.uk for more details.

Research agenda: There is an active clinical research group. The Blu is leading a multi-centre randomised controlled trial of oral versus intravenous antibiotics (OVIVA). We have described outcomes after debridement and retention or 2-stage revision, the outcomes after stopping long-term antibiotics and the microbiology of prosthetic joint infection and chronic osteomyelitis.

Selected Recent Publications

- Barlow L, Atkins BL. The clinical presentation of prosthetic joint infection. Journal of Antimicrobial chemotherapy 2014 69 (9) 123-27