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 Foundation trust. The Bone Infection Unit (BIU) 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 trainee) and a specialist orthopaedic surgeon (and trainee). Plastic surgeons are often involved. There is a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes a nurse, medical team, physiotherapist and home IV nurses. There is also a weekly parenteral antibiotic therapy (OPAT) programme. The BIU 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 advice on microbiological methods https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/standards-for-microbiology-investigations). There is close liaison with infection control.

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, specialist nurses and allied health staff. See www.obi.org.uk & www.hartleytaylor.co.uk, for more details.

Research agenda: There is an active clinical research group. The BIU is leading a multi-centre randomised controlled trial of oral versus intravenous antibiotics (OVIDIA). 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.

The unit is integrated closely with the OUH departments of adult and paediatric infectious diseases and microbiology. This offers additional opportunities to attend weekly educational seminars with invited speakers; combined case conferences; medical and surgical grand rounds; ward rounds on the inpatient infectious diseases ward; microbiology rounds (including intensive care, transplant, and general clinical consults); and HIV, Infectious diseases, Rheumatology and Hepatitis clinics.

Multiple intra-operative sampling using separate instruments

Prosthetic Joint Infections

Diabetic Foot Infections

Spinal Infections

Selected Recent Publications


