

A day in the life of a patient

St Richard's, Chichester
July 2020



A 5.30 am sleepy start to my day in Wittering Ward at St Richard's. It had been a busy night with three admissions to our bay, but you learn to block out the noise of the trolley wheels and your vague awareness of people coming and going.

Every day is much the same during this Covid 19 pandemic. Staff have PPE available and spend a long time putting it on to go to a patient with a bed pan, and then taking it off, washing their hands and then starting all over again because my drip has tissued and they need to sort that out. I notice a nurse spending that bit of extra time with an elderly lady who fell and broke two bones in her neck. She was frightened and clutched at the nurse so it's impossible to keep apart at a time like that. **The nurse was calm and her words encouraging and the lady responded well.**



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It seems everyone has more time than normal. Things are very different. People are put together in bays - medical, orthopaedic and surgical together. This means lots of different consultants and their entourage mill about the nursing station before descending on "their" patient. That can be very disconcerting but it is all remarkably good natured and consultants seem more approachable. There is laughter and banter between the staff and patients are drawn together to support each other because there are no visitors. Mobiles are used frequently to keep in touch with families - sometimes producing tears - but we all help each other.



It is markedly obvious that each staff member takes their job seriously and puts their heart and soul into it. I will never forget the lady who brought me towels, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste. She was like a whirling dervish anticipating patients needs before they even thought about it.

Some things are funny - one of the patients was going to the operating theatre and wanted a quick shower. In she went and after a few minutes the water came out from under the shower room door into the ward and for a few minutes we all found it funny. The whirling dervish had it covered and towels were flying through the air in the big mop up!

The food is disappointing and the patients talk endlessly about roast dinners or cooked breakfasts. We all understand why it's like this but the same menu twice a day for seven days a week is boring beyond belief. A breakfast of cereal and tea is groaned at and a longing for toast expressed.

The overall picture of Wittering Ward was that they were all totally amazing in times of great difficulties. Efficient, organised, caring and dedicated in Covid days.

