

# Gastroenterology and hepatology

## A Follow-up of established outpatients

The access/follow-up card system (see Appendix) should be implemented for patients with the following conditions:

- ▶ proven malignancy: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus planned selective follow-up for severe cases (Yellow Card)
- ▶ all oesophageal diseases: delay four months (no card)
- ▶ peptic ulceration, including *H. pylori* infection: delay four months (no card)
- ▶ pancreatic disease: delay four months (no card)
- ▶ coeliac disease: delay four months (no card)
- ▶ short bowel syndrome: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus selective follow-up for severe patients (Yellow Card)
- ▶ Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus selective follow-up for severe patients (Yellow Card)
- ▶ all functional disorders (irritable bowel etc): delay four months (no card)
- ▶ cirrhosis: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus selective follow-up for severe patients (Yellow Card)
- ▶ chronic viral hepatitis: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus selective follow-up for severe patients (Yellow Card)
- ▶ other liver diseases: delay four months (no card)
- ▶ liver transplantation: delay four months and issue Blue Card, plus selective follow-up for severe patients (Yellow Card).

## B New patient appointments

Examples of those new life-threatening or severe symptoms for which patients should be referred for outpatient consultation, together with priority indicator (P1, P2, P3; see Table 2, p4) and the access/follow-up card to be issued are as follows:

- ▶ dysphagia for solids (P1: Yellow Card)
- ▶ new severe dyspepsia aged >60 years (P2/P3: Yellow Card)
- ▶ unexplained weight loss of >15% (P2: Yellow Card)
- ▶ iron deficiency anaemia (must have MCV <80 fl) (P2: Yellow Card)
- ▶ abdominal pain, plus raised CRP (P2/P3: Yellow Card)
- ▶ jaundice (P2: Yellow Card)

- ▶ severe abdominal pain (P3: Yellow Card)
- ▶ unexplained major abnormality of liver function tests (P2: Yellow Card)
- ▶ onset of ascites (P2/P3: Yellow Card)
- ▶ bloody diarrhoea (P2/P3: Yellow Card)
- ▶ low abdominal pain plus substantial rectal bleeding (P2/P3: Yellow Card).

All other new referrals must be delayed (either by the GP or by the consultant) for four months. This emergency strategy will undoubtedly affect usual standards of care.

**Roy Pounder**

**Jon Rhodes**

Joint Specialty Committee for Gastroenterology & Hepatology