Surfing the Doom and Gloom

Not only have we endured a dank and largely wet summer, but the national and international news items have been far from encouraging. St Swithin seems to remain a better predictor of wet weather than modern technology. Do I remember hearing the long range meteorologists prophesy earlier in the year that a “barbecue summer” was on its way? Three years into the global economic catastrophe and we are cursed with threats of double dip recessions. Are there such entities as triple and quadruple dip recessions? Perhaps we are about to find out.

I remember that the experts predicted modest growth and green shoots of recovery for this financial year. I ponder is what we are experiencing a recession at all or more realistically are we seeing a long overdue re-balancing of the relative values of the world currencies and the assets that underpin them. The runes seem to augur that the period of austerity will continue for the foreseeable future.

Over recent weeks whilst gathering my thoughts for this column, once again we have heard loudly voiced concerns about the burdensome cost of Private Finance Initiatives. Yet we will continue to use them to fund NHS building programmes. Confusing - as we are concomitantly told that we have too many hospitals and beds therein? Does that mean that we have too many hospitals – as we are concomitantly told building programmes. Confusing continue to use them to fund NHS Finance Initiatives. Yet we will burdensome cost of Private loudy voiced concerns about column, once again we have heard gathering my thoughts for this future.

Surely the progress to minimally disruptive surgery and local anaesthesia has shifted same day surgery for many procedures into the realms of safety for more vulnerable groups of patients? I would really appreciate to hear from any of our readers who are engaged in delivering ambulatory services to victims of uncommon conditions.

PS. Sorry, we might have the processes to fix the NHS but even the most enthusiastic members of the day surgery family cannot fix the British weather.

I was recently reading an article on anaesthesia for patients suffering from both acquired and congenital neuromuscular disorders. The article was terminally punctuated by the comment - these patients are not suitable for day surgery. No evidence was referenced. It reminded me of a Radio 4 broadcast about chronic progressive life shortening disease which included a plea for access, not to excellent facilities, but to adequate treatment. Preferably without having to travel many scores of miles to avail that care. Readers, I ask of you all, have we day surgery experience of managing operations for these vulnerable patients?

Have the experts not taken into account the Day Surgery Solution? And the formulae enshrined therein are applicable to all brands of interventional medicine and radiology!

Then of course we hear of the plight of higher education. How will our children afford their college fees? Will the courses they choose, and pay for, equip them with the technical skills to practice the healing arts and also to care about their patients?

So what can we contribute to raise spirits, maintain quality and dignity of care but in more affordable packages - yes, Day Surgery!

As always this edition of the Journal of One Day Surgery is dedicated to those working hard to deliver better care at lower cost and “Surf through the Doom and Gloom”.

Haroon and co-authors describe their experience of pre dosing day surgery patients with oral paracetamol. They advocate amongst the virtues of their regime are patient satisfaction and cost effectiveness. Mosley and co-authors have revisited very challenging of subjects – prediction of conversion to open from laparoscopic cholecystectomy. They aspire to simplicity in their risk assessments. Court and co-authors are using a modified Karydakis procedure to pursue an increase in the same day surgical management of pilonidal disease. Marsh and co-authors describe their dedicated Hand Surgery Service that they have orchestrated in Portsmouth. They promote the efficiencies, cost savings and quality assurances that can be delivered if there is a will to do so. Cumulatively these articles demonstrate the virtues that are required to continue improving surgical care namely enthusiasm, attention to detail, a modicum of parsimony and conviction to reduce length of stay.

References
1. “Wettest July on Record” The Met Office reported on BBC News 1 August 2011.