



Proactive Care of the Older Patient (POPS)

What is POPS?

POPS stands for Proactive care of the Older Patient undergoing Surgery.

The service originated from Guys and St Thomas' Hospital, where it has demonstrated that if Geriatricians (Ageing and Health Doctors) are involved in the pre-operative assessment, and post-operative care of our older surgical patients, then they have less complications after their operation, and can even get home quicker.

How does the service work?

Here at DGT the POPS team works with patients who are under the General Surgical or Vascular teams. Before an operation, some people will benefit from a thorough medical assessment which considers any medical conditions that person may have, as well as any other factors that may have an impact on their recovery. These might include their situation at home, their mobility, any decline in their memory, or their mood. The POPS team will assess and treat all these things.

On the wards, the POPS team works alongside the Surgical doctors, working to get our older patients back to their normal health, and home, as quickly as possible. There are many patients who are looked after by the Surgical doctors in hospital, but in fact never need an operation. The POPS team also help look after the medical needs of many of these patients.

Why do we need the service?

Increasing numbers of older people are having both planned and emergency surgery. This is not only because the population is getting older, but also because advances in surgical and anaesthetic techniques means that some operations can be done in ways that are less risky to older patients, or patients with other medical conditions.

Whilst this means that being old or having a number of medical problems does not exclude people from having surgery, it doesn't change the fact that such people do remain at higher risk of complications both during and after surgery. As older, and more medically unwell patients are undergoing operations, we are seeing evidence showing that if geriatricians and surgeons look after these patients together then we can reduce such complications.

Who are we?

The POPS team consists of:

- Catherine Meilak – POPS Consultants
- Anna Whittle – POPS Consultant
- Telma Da Silva – POPS Clinical Specialist Nurse
- Sue Relf – Occupational Therapist
- Rebecca Josh – Secretary
- Ruth de Las Casas – Darzi Fellow 2017-18

