



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **The GHA acquires new technology to treat lymphoedema**

The GHA is delighted to have recently received a donation of three compression pumps for use in patients with lymphoedema. The pumps were purchased by Breast Cancer Support Gibraltar and their acquisition will help enhance the care delivered by the GHA lymphoedema therapists.

Lymphoedema is a poorly understood chronic, non curable condition, that can affect any part of the body but occurs mainly in the limbs, causing them to become swollen and congested with fluid. If not diagnosed and treated it can become disfiguring and debilitating with an associated reduction in quality of life.

The causes of lymphoedema are numerous but generally fall into two main categories: primary lymphoedema which is due to congenital abnormalities, and secondary lymphoedema which normally occurs after surgery or following repeated infections or injury.

The pumps, called 'Lymphassist' mechanically undertake the existing time consuming treatment of manual lymphatic drainage (MLD) which forms part of a multi pronged approach to lymphoedema care.

The new pumps will enable more patients to benefit from this treatment on a regular basis. The treatment reduces the volume of fluid in the limb and softens 'solid' tissue; however there are some contra-indications to this therapy and all patients need to be assessed individually following a medical referral to the lymphoedema team.

In accepting the donation from the charity the Minister for Health, Yvette Del Agua said, "This is another example of the generosity of the Gibraltar community providing equipment that enhances the quality of care provided by the GHA. For the past nine years, the GHA has been delivering a programme for staff in lymphoedema management. The number of trained staff has now expanded considerably and the new equipment is an excellent example of co-

operation between the GHA and the local charities, in this case Breast Cancer Support Gibraltar”.

The team consists of the following members: SN Christian Cano, SN Donna Eate, Amanda Danino – physiotherapist, Christine Gill, Breast Care Nurse Specialist, SN Eve Marsh, SN Annette Martinez, SN Begonia Perez, Susan Rhoda, Practice Development Sister, Sister Suzanne Romero, SN Annie Rourke, Jan Wink-physiotherapist.

In making the donation, Mrs Isobel Ellul- Hammond stated: ‘this is a very important day for Gibraltar for we have managed to play our part again in improving the quality of care provided in our community. It is another example of responsible spending of our charitable funds.

The treatment will be available in the primary care centre (for leg lymphoedema) and in St Bernard’s Hospital for leg and arm lymphoedema.

**Note for Editors:**

**The presentation will take place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 at 4.00 pm in the Palliative Care Department, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, St Bernard’s Hospital.**

**Members of the press are invited to attend and there will be a photo shoot opportunity.**