

Zap the habit

by Wendy Scott

STAFF at Monklands and Bellshill Hospitals are being offered space-age therapy to help zap their smoking habit.

Smokers are queuing up for a pioneering laser treatment which works on acupuncture points to help curb nicotine craving.

The revolutionary therapy is just one of the options on offer, including nicotine patches, and counselling, which are proving highly successful in helping staff to stub out at the hospitals which became completely smoke-free zones this month.

Four months after joining the latest smoking cessation programme, 44 out of 51 smokers are still managing to abstain from cigarettes.

Mark Kennedy, health promotion co-ordinator at Monklands Hospital said: "We are delighted with the success of the programme and in particular with the laser therapy which is proving extremely popular.

"Over the past three years we have been working to help our staff quit smoking to ensure they do not join the 998 people in Lanarkshire who die of smoking related illnesses every year.

"As health care professionals it is essential that we set a good example for patients."

One person who can testify to its success is local auxilliary Helen Layden who gave up smoking two months ago after more than 30 years.

"To be honest I was a bit sceptical about laser treatment. I am down from 25 cigarettes a day to zero."