Nitrous oxide is the second most commonly used recreational drug by young people in the UK. Its use has increased significantly in the last decade, helped by the easy access to it. There has also been an increase in cases of associated myeloneuropathy, usually in tandem with severe vitamin B12 deficiency. Many cases are now presenting to emergency departments across the UK with gait disturbance, paraesthesia, weakness, numbness or ataxia. It is vital that those cases that present to emergency care settings are picked up, diagnosed and treated appropriately to avoid preventable disability.

The ABN Clinical Practice Guide to Nitrous Oxide-induced Subacute Combined Degeneration of the Cord, published today in Practical Neurology, is a pragmatic guide to the recognition and management of these cases, based on reviews and expert opinion. It is designed for use at presentation and subsequent investigation, treatment and follow up. The guidelines were developed by a team of neurologists from London, Birmingham, Nottingham and Manchester led by Prof Alastair Noyce, Queen Mary University of London. The guide provides a valuable pathway to respond to a modern day neurological issue, and aims to minimize the damage that use of nitrous oxide causes.

For any press queries please contact:

Sophia Prout
Faculty Communications Manager – Medicine and Dentistry
Queen Mary University of London
Email: s.prout@qmul.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 7718136512
For out-of-hours queries please contact +44 07970 096 188