

# HUG MAGAZINE



**December 2008**

(issued bi-monthly)

For HAEMATOLOGY and ONCOLOGY patients, being treated  
in the Day Therapy Centre and Dove Ward or under review

*Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year to all our readers*



Our recent sales table at the Hospital

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**H.U.G. SWINDON**  
HAEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY UNITED GROUP, G.W.H.

## H.U.G. Swindon Get-Togethers

We meet in the Academy (at the back of the Hospital), Room Number as shown.

Turn up at any time between  
10:00 am and 12:30 pm unless otherwise stated  
on the Thursdays shown:

**8<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Seminar Room 7 (10:00 - 12:15)**

**12<sup>th</sup> February 2009 - Seminar Room 1**

**12<sup>th</sup> March 2009 – Seminar Room 1**

### AIMS

**HUG aims to improve the environment for patients of the Day Therapy Centre and Dove Unit or under review following treatment in these areas at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon by:**

- ❖ **Holding regular “get-togethers” where Haematology and Oncology patients and their relatives can make friends, share their views and experiences and receive information about hospital and other relevant services, in an informal atmosphere over refreshments.**
- ❖ **Producing the HUG Magazine, a light-hearted and informative bi-monthly publication and making it available in Dove Unit, the Day Therapy Centre and the Osprey Waiting Area.**
- ❖ **Pointing patients in the direction of specialist help available, as required.**
- ❖ **Following up on comments about Hospital Services and reporting back on progress made.**
- ❖ **Fund-raising to provide items for the benefit of patients, such as mugs, bookshelves, room redecoration, donation to Dove Ward Charitable funds, Christmas gifts and slippers for patients. Ideas are welcomed at any time for future projects.**
- ❖ **Maintaining a website to promote the group.**

### **Get-Togethers away from the Hospital**

**In addition to the get-togethers at the Hospital, as advertised on page 2, we meet for coffee and a spot of lunch for anyone who wants it at least once a month. Contact us for the next location, date and time, if you would prefer to meet us, away from the Hospital. We are a small friendly group, who would make you very welcome.**

# INTERESTING MEDICAL NEWS

## **Blood test to detect ovarian cancer**

A new blood test. Called OvPlex, which could detect ovarian cancer at an early stage could be available in the UK within 2 years. It is already licensed in Australia and works by looking for signs of five different chemicals which are given off by tumours as they grow. Recent trial results indicated better than 90% success at detecting tumour cells.

According to some estimates three out of four sufferers are not diagnosed until the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Earlier detection in women with high risk factors would mean that they could have surgery or radiotherapy before the disease spread. Risk factors include a family history of the disease, having had breast cancer, starting periods particularly early, using HRT and being overweight.

Daily Mail 4 November 2008

## **Cancer survival rates**

Researchers have studied cancer survival rates in Great Britain and 13 other European countries. They looked at the figures for 39 different types of cancer and broke the data down by age and sex. They then drew comparisons with the best survival rates and the average survival rates in Europe. The results show that if our survival rates were as good as the European average, there would have been 6,500 fewer deaths annually - within five years of diagnosis - for cancer patients diagnosed between 1995 and 1999. If UK survival rates were as good as the best in Europe, this would equate to around 11,000 fewer deaths in cancer patients each year.

Cancer Research UK believes that the most important reasons for the survival gap include poor awareness of the symptoms of cancer, late presentation to a GP and, late onward referral to hospital. National Awareness and Early Diagnosis Initiative (NAEDI) has been launched to redress the balance by:

- understanding levels of awareness of cancer symptoms
- providing clear messages on the signs and symptoms of cancer
- encouraging people to go to the doctor with possible signs of cancer
- understanding and tackling delays in primary care
- evaluating research that has already been done and spotting any gaps
- carrying out research comparing survival with other countries, and
- conducting new research into raising awareness and promoting early diagnosis.

Cancer Research 21 November 2008

## **Prescription payments for cancer patients**

As announced at the Labour Party conference in September 2008, charges for cancer patients will be scrapped from April 2009. The change is estimated to cost £20 million in a year, but the government and the drugs industry have already struck a deal which could save the NHS around £400m a year. A flexible pricing scheme will mean new drugs can be initially introduced at a lower price, which could be increased if the medicine proves effective. An Office of Fair Trading report last year said the NHS spent up to £500m annually on overpriced medicines. Just 12% of all prescriptions are currently paid for, because of existing exemptions.

BBC News 19 November 2008

## **NICE (or isn't it?)**

NICE, the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health. Their guidance is developed using the expertise of the NHS and the wider healthcare community including healthcare professionals, patients and carers, industry and the academic world.

Although the methods for developing the various forms of guidance differ, all the development processes are said to be underpinned by the key principles of basing recommendations on the best available evidence and involving all stakeholders in a transparent and collaborative manner.

NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:

- public health - guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention of ill health for those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public and voluntary sector
- health technologies - guidance on the use of new and existing medicines, treatments and procedures within the NHS
- clinical practice - guidance on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS.

NICE has been criticised for taking too long to approve drugs for use in the NHS after they have been registered as safe by the Department of Health's Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). NICE is also widely slated for banning drugs from NHS use on grounds of cost versus benefit.

We have all read of recent cases where cancer patients have been refused drugs that will prolong their lives. Unfortunately, as in other areas of life, including our own personal finances, the NHS only has a finite pot of money and each drug or treatment has to fight for its place. Under NICE's current rules, a year of quality life is valued at between £20,000 and £30,000, but critics have long argued that this number was pulled out of thin air and lacks scientific credibility. It is very difficult to see how a sum of money can be put on a year of quality life, and impossible to define quality of life, but apparently new research is said to reveal that the public values life much more highly, at between £35,000 and £70,000 a year.

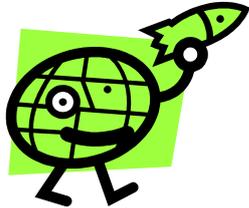
The rising tide of protest over the refusal by the NHS to provide expensive drugs for cancer and other conditions is being funded by the pharmaceutical industry, an investigation by The Independent newspaper has revealed. Patient groups that have been among the most vocal over decisions to restrict access to drugs on the NHS depend for up to half of their income on drug companies- details often undisclosed. However, very often Consultants also recommend new drugs, although they may not have access to all research results.

We have been promised changes to the process which will result in faster processing and approval of applications and it would appear that this cannot come too soon. The future ability of patients paying for top-up treatments may also help.

Sources: NICE website, assorted newspaper reports

**I USED TO WORRY ABOUT THE  
END OF THE WORLD;**

**NOW WITH THE STATE OF THE  
ECONOMY, I WORRY ABOUT  
THE END OF THE MONTH.**



**H.U.G. ★**  
**fridge magnet**  
**★ fun**

**Women are meant  
to be loved, not to  
be understood**



**I'm tired of all this nonsense about  
beauty being only skin-deep. That's  
deep enough!**

*sweet words*

**Keep you words sweet  
in case you ever have to  
eat them.**

**what do you call a group  
of people who gather  
outside a building to  
smoke?**

**Snoutcasts.**



**Maturity is that short  
period between childhood and  
dotage.**

## Puzzle over it

### **HUG Christmas Carol and Song Quiz**

Can you identify the following Christmas carols or songs from the first letters of the words in the titles? There is an easy one to start you off.

1. J B .....
2. L T o B .....
3. I D o a W C .....
4. O i R D C .....
5. C T .....
6. H t H A S .....
7. R t R-N R .....
8. S t N .....
9. W W Y a M C .....
10. T F N .....
11. T T D o C .....
12. O C A Y F .....
13. G R Y M G .....
14. T H a t I .....
15. D D M o H .....

ooooooOoooooo

### **Call for Patients who have had Stem Cell Transplants by Donor**

**HUG is keen to hear the views of patients who have had stem cell transplants by donor at the Royal Free Hospital in London. Please contact the group by email, if you would be willing to share your views and experiences.**

# H.U.G. News – read all about it

Get-togethers were held at the Great Western on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2008, with Coffee Mornings at the Blunsdon Arms in between

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## 1. Recent Get-Togethers

We did not have a speaker at either the October or November get-togethers, which gave us plenty of time to chat and catch up with each other's activities.

## 2. Fund-Raising

Our stall behind the atrium on 19<sup>th</sup> November took almost £150 and the repeat on 5<sup>th</sup> December a further £210, with just £5 (after payment for the table) raised on the same evening at the Lambourn Christmas Fair. Figures include proceeds from the sale of two dozen mugs, which we had made for the group. We are very grateful to Chonette for the donation of Mexican craft items, part of the stock from her shop.

## 3. Donations

Our thanks also go to Mrs Ward, her family and friends, who have donated the generous sum of £665 to HUG, in memory of Mr Ward, who died recently in Dove Ward. Although he was not a HUG member, the family decided that they would like to make donations to a local group. We hope that they will be involved in the decision on how to spend these funds.

## 4. Events

Our Christmas lunch will be at the Toby Inn on 15<sup>th</sup> December. We shall be joined there by some of our members who are not able to attend regularly, because they are back at work.

Our next outing will be to Maggie's Centre in Oxford, which we had hoped to do before Christmas, but will now take place in early January. We are going to hear about what is available there for patients and carers and have a relaxation session.

## 5. Spending

We now have the go ahead to buy magnifying glasses for Dove Ward, for use by patients who find it difficult to read, with the light available. We are just awaiting details of the specific gel bags required for Day Therapy, so that we can go ahead with the purchase of these also.

After trialling some different models, staff in Day Therapy have decided which wheeled stools they prefer. We understand that there are still some negotiations on price, before we go ahead with a purchase. These are not standard NHS issue but would help greatly to avoid back strain, when nurses are sitting by beds for extended period to inject chemo drugs.

**A few Christmas Cracker  
Jokes and Quiz Questions for the children**

*Jokes*

Nearing Christmas, one turkey said to the other, "It's best to say goodbye now – I don't think I'll be around after necks-tweak."

After Christmas, it's mother's job to separate the men from the toys.

*Cracker Questions and Answers*

**What type of shoes do frogs wear?**

Open-toad sandals

**How do you make milk shake?**

Give it a good scare.

**Did you hear about the magic tractor?**

It turned into a field.

**How can you help a starving cannibal?**

Give him a hand.

**What is at the end of everything?**

The letter G.

**Who was the most famous Russian billiards player?**

Inoff the Red

**What animals need oiling?**

Mice, because they squeak.

**What do you call a man with a paper bag on his head?**

Russell

**What does an angry kangaroo do?**

Get hopping mad

*Quiz questions*

**What year did the famous painter Pablo Picasso die?**

1973 (at the age of 78).

**What colour is octopus blood?**

Blue

**Who put his cloak over a puddle for Queen Elizabeth I?**

Sir Walter Raleigh

**Of which country is Addis Ababa the capital?**

Ethiopia.

**What does an anemometer measure?**

Wind speed.

**What is Britain's oldest Sunday newspaper?**

The Observer



## (Reasonably) Healthy Nibble Recipes

### **Vegetable and Chestnut Rolls**

(suitable for vegetarians)

1 carrot, peeled and roughly chopped  
 1 medium leek, trimmed and roughly chopped  
 1 medium courgette, roughly chopped  
 1 stick celery, trimmed and roughly chopped  
 2 teaspoons fresh thyme  
 200g pack whole chestnuts  
 100g fresh breadcrumbs  
 2 tablespoons olive oil  
 5 tabbsp port  
 1/4 whole nutmeg or 2 teaspoons nutmeg powder  
 1 tablespoon low salt soy sauce  
 2 tabspoons grated hard cheese (optional)  
 Flour for dusting  
 500g shortcrust pastry  
 Beaten egg to seal and glaze

Add vegetables and thyme to food processor and pulse till fine. Add chestnuts and pulse again till they are coarse.

In a large frying pan, heat oil and add vegetables. Cook over a medium heat for about 10 minutes, stirring, till mixture is quite dry and has reduced in volume. Add port, nutmeg and soy sauce and season to taste. Sizzle for 2 minutes then tip mixture into a large bowl containing the breadcrumbs. Stir in cheese and mix well.

Roll out pastry thinly and cut into three oblongs, each about 35.5 cm x 12.5 cm. Rub a little oil into your hands and roll out a third of filling into a large sausage shape, placing it along the long edge of the pasty. Fold pastry over filling and seal with beaten egg.

Repeat so that you have three rolls. Place on greaseproof paper and pop into the freezer for about an hour to firm.

Remove from freezer and brush with egg, before slicing into 5cm rolls. Snip a couple of vents in the top of each roll.

Place on an oiled baking sheet, 5 cm apart, at 180°C, Gas Mark 4 for 16-20 minutes, till golden.

Serve hot or cold.

### **Meatballs with Coriander Dip**

Meatballs  
 2 slices bread  
 50g pitted black olives  
 450g minced beef  
 1 clove garlic  
 1 teaspoon ground cumin  
 1 egg

Coriander Dip  
 4 tablespoons chopped coriander  
 225 g Greek yogurt  
 1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 A few drops of Tabasco sauce

Soak bread in 4 tablespoons water.

Place olives, minced beef, garlic, cumin and egg in a food processor and whiz till smooth. Add bread, season and whiz again.

Wet hands and shape mixture into tiny meatballs. Place in an oiled roasting tin and cook at 180°C/Gas 4 for 15 minutes.

Mix coriander, yogurt, lemon juice, Tabasco and season. Spoon into a small bowl.

Spear cooked meatballs with cocktail sticks and arrange round the dip. Garnish with coriander.

### **Mini Roulades**

1 large carrot, peeled  
 2 celery sticks  
 100g fresh beetroot, peeled  
 175g cream cheese  
 2 tablespoons lime juice  
 2 tablespoons coriander leaves  
 50g smoked salmon trimmings  
 12 slices smoked salmon

Cut vegetables into strips, put carrot and celery in one bowl of icy water and beetroot in another.

Place the cheese, juice and coriander in a food processor and blend till smooth, add salmon trimmings and process for a few seconds. Place a little mixture in a salmon slice, roll up, cut in half.

Drain vegetables, pat dry, mix together, season. Put roulades onto a plate and garnish with the vegetables, or replace with your own choice of vegetables.

## Farewell to Debbie

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden passing on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008, of Debbie, who had been an enthusiastic and very popular member of the HUG Group for more than two years, but had also attended get-togethers when the group was first formed.

Her zest for life was really infectious, and one of our members described her as the bubbliest person he had ever met. Despite repeated health setbacks, she never complained and worked hard to regain fitness and weight after each.

Debbie was one of the "team", who inspected the GWH catering department and made further suggestions for improvements, carrying on the hard work of DMcL.

She was full of ideas generally, suggesting the venues for the last two years' outings and coming up with the idea for the new HUG MUG design. She had also recently researched the suggested restaurants for our Christmas meal and recommended what became our final choice.

We are so sorry that Debbie won't be there with us in person on the day, but we are sure she will be there with us in spirit for a toast in her honour. We are proud to have known you, Debbie!

Our thoughts are with her mother, sister and brother and their families at this difficult time.

—ooOoo—

We send our best wishes to other patients who are undergoing treatment over the festive season and our commiserations to other families, including the Wards, who have recently lost a loved one.



### QUIZ Answers

1. Jingle Bells,
2. Little Town of Bethlehem,
3. I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas
4. Once in Royal David City
5. Christmas Time
6. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
7. Rudolph the Red- Nosed Reindeer
8. Still the Night
9. We Wish You a Merry Christmas
10. The First Noel
11. The Twelve Days of Christmas
12. O Come All Ye Faithful
13. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
14. The Holly and The Ivy
15. Ding Dong Merrily on High