

HUG MAGAZINE



December 2011

(issued on 2nd or 3rd Thursday of alternate months on meeting days)

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



A Merry Christmas and a Healthy New Year
to all HUG Magazine readers

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H.U.G. Swindon Get-Togethers at the GWH

We meet in the Academy on the second Thursday of the month.

Turn up at any time between
All between 10:00 am and 12:30 pm unless otherwise stated

January 2012 – Note no GWH meeting
16 February 2012 – Seminar Room 5
15 March 2012 – Seminar Room 7 (10:15-12:30)

(The Academy can be reached from the front of the Hospital by going through the double doors at the back of the atrium, turning right and following the signs, which first appear at the end of the corridor. Alternatively if you are eligible to use the disabled car parking spaces at the back of the hospital, cross the road and head back towards the entry road. The Academy entrance is about half way along, in the main building. The small parking area just outside the Academy is for staff only.)

What do we do?

HUG offers tea, sympathy, sharing of ideas and information and much more, to patients and their families or carers, including:

- **Organising monthly get-togethers at the Hospital, Coffee Mornings (contact us for details of the next one, usually around the end of each month) and Craft Sessions (on the 2nd Monday of the month) away from the Hospital**
- **Suggesting how and where to access professional help, where appropriate**
- **Attending Cancer Services User Involvement Meetings on behalf of patients and carers and discussing or raising and following up on issues of importance to them.**
- ✓ **Items currently under discussion include Complementary Therapies, End of Treatment Care Plans and Radiotherapy for Swindon**
- **Fund-raising to provide practical help with purchases including thermometers, travel bands, mugs, slippers and gel bags, when suggested by clinical staff, patients or carers.**

Maintaining a website and distributing leaflets to promote the group and advertise out activities.

Producing the HUG Magazine bi-monthly and making it available in Cancer Services areas, providing direct to members and posting on the website.

INTERESTING HEALTH-RELATED NEWS

Perhaps lots of coffee can be good for us after all?

Researchers from Harvard School of Public Health reported recently in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* reports, that drinking four cups of coffee a day could help to keep womb cancer at bay. It may help to lower the levels of hormones believed to fuel endometrial cancer, which is the most common form of the disease. The study covered a total of 672 cases of the cancer over 26 years.

They noted that risk increases for women with age, weight and having a mother who developed the disease. Drinking four or more cups of coffee a day reduces the likelihood of developing this womb cancer by 25% compared to those who drink one cup or less daily.

For more information refer to www.nutraingredients.com/Research/Coffee-may-offer-womb-cancer-protection-say-Harvard-researchers

Microwaving and boiling tumours!

A pioneering treatment called "the microwave tissue ablation system" is being used to treat some patients in Oxford, London, Southampton and Basingstoke. A needle-like applicator is inserted into the tumour and then activated to discharge a blast of microwave energy. This destroys the cancerous tissues by cooking them in the same way that a microwave oven would cook food.

The Acculis MTA system has been developed by British scientists and produced in Hampshire by Microsulis Medical. Patients who receive the treatment are usually not able to have surgery because of the position of the tumour in the liver, lungs or pancreas or because their state of health is not good. It is possible that the treatment could have much wider application, however.

A similar treatment has been developed by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden to kill breast cancer cells. It uses a targeted electrical current to heat tumours to 70-90°C. Treatment takes only a few minutes under local anaesthetic and patients are well enough to return to work immediately. This is known as Preferential Radio-Frequency Ablation. So far the 80 patients who have undergone the treatment have been followed up for two years, and none has had a recurrence of the cancer.

Sunday Express, 27 November 2011 and Daily Mail, 22 November 2011

New possibility for bowel cancer treatment

Californian researchers have reported in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that they have identified a protein called IF7, which seeks out the blood vessels that tumours need to grow and spread. They linked IF7 to another cancer drug and watched bowel cancer tumours shrink dramatically in diseased mice. Because of the way the drug works by stealth, it does not damage surrounding healthy cells. For a comprehensible explanation go to:

www.doctortipster.com/6884-side-effects-of-chemotherapy-can-be-minimized-according-to-new-study.html

Spa breaks for cancer patients

Abbi Wright, a business woman, who is founder and MD of Spabreaks.com (she comes from Hermitage, near Newbury) was recently horrified to find that cancer patients had been refused treatment at one of her spas. She has now set up some Recovery Retreats which replace unsuitable spa activities with complimentary therapies such as walks in the woods, Reiki, manicures and pedicures, indulgent lunches and luxury picnics. The nearest one to us is Huntenhull, near Frome, Wiltshire, but treatments are not cheap. See http://www.spabreaks.com/recovery_retreats for more details or telephone 0800 043 6600.

Reported in the Newbury Weekly News, date not noted

Parking at the Great Western Hospital: the latest

As you've no doubt read, there have been a few teething problems with the new parking. These have made the local and national press. I've heard that instructions on the staff pay machines were in Spanish, for example! The entry and exit points to car parks have changed, but at my last visit on 9th December, signage was clear and traffic was moving smoothly.

More disabled parking is now at the back of the hospital on the far left. There is no barrier for disabled badge holders, so no exit cards are required. However people with disabilities parking there will have further to go to most departments.

All other visitors and outpatients need to use the barrier entry and exit in the car parks at the front of the hospital. The main advantage is that visitors and day patients don't need to worry about having to feed meters if they are delayed at an appointment or visit longer than planned. Eligible patients attending for treatment will be provided with parking cards and will be required to pay £1 only on exit (e.g. for long chemo sessions).

Staff are being encouraged to car share and can park on site six days in ten over a rolling two week period during the day.

We'd be interested to hear how it's been for you!

Chemo Hats

We have been hard at work on more styles and colours of chemo hats.

As mentioned last time they are made of a mixture of 55% merino wool and 45% silk, which is lovely and soft. Because they are knitted on the round using circular needles, there are no seams to irritate the scalp.

We have five colours available now, namely plum, slate, purple, cherry and a summer greens mix, plus some with a contrasting stripe.

They are available for £8.50 from HUG.

We have informed Cancer Services and the Staff in Day Therapy and provided posters with pictures showing some examples.

Do pass details on to anyone you know who may be interested or contact Margaret or Irene direct, using one or other of the telephone numbers on the front page.

Christmas Crackers: Corny Jokes and Quiz

Why did the baker get an electric shock?

Because he stood on a bun and a current ran up his leg.

What sort of television programmes do ducks like?

Duckumentaries.

Why did the boy blush when he opened the fridge?

He saw the salad dressing.

Why did the little girl change her mind about buying her grandmother a packet of handkerchiefs for Christmas?

She didn't know how to work out her nose size.

If an athlete gets Athlete's Foot, what does an Elf get?

Mistle-toes.

What do you call a Russian Snooker player?

In Off The Red.

Why was the broom late?

It overslept.

What beats its chest and swings from Christmas cake to Christmas cake?

Tarzipan

Why don't robots have brothers?

Because they all have trans-sisters

What's a hedgehog's favourite food?

Prickled onions.

Quiz

1. In what city did Miracle on 34th Street take place?
2. Which ocean goes to the deepest depths?
3. Which bear grows larger, the brown grizzly or the polar.
4. Who was the Greek God of the sea?
5. Which is the most common eye colour in the world?
6. In which year was the first episode of Coronation Street Broadcast?
7. What is Britain oldest Sunday newspaper?
8. Where is Poet's Corner?
9. What do you get if you cross a snowman with a vampire?
10. What is pictured on the Lebanese flag

Answers on Page 8 – no cheating!



HUG ★
Fridge magnet
 ★ **fun**

**It's all right letting yourself go,
 as long as you can get yourself
 back.**

Mike Jagger



Sometimes too much
 to drink isn't
 enough.
 (But remember too
 much is bad for your
 health!)



Always try to be modest. And be really
 proud of it!



**You know you're living in the 21st
 century when.... you email the person
 who works at the desk next to you.**




 Men are like £100 notes.
 The first thing you need to do
 is change them.

Why can't women
 put on mascara with
 their mouths closed?



Performance improvements and against other countries

Figures compiled by Macmillan show that cancer patients are living six times longer after diagnosis than they were 40 years ago. This is not surprising, for a number of reasons. Greater awareness among members of the public and GPs, combined with screening and better diagnostic tools, have enabled earlier diagnosis in many cases; there have been vast improvements in surgical techniques and equipment available; there have been advances in the possibilities for chemotherapy and other drug treatments; radiotherapy has moved on also. The charity looked at survival times for 20 types of cancer between 1971/72 and 2007, using figures collected by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Clearly these statistics are already out of date and do not reflect the latest realities.

Macmillan has warned, however, that there is a “shocking variation” between different types of cancer and that there has been a “woeful lack of improvement” in some areas. There are also too many patients who are left with long-term health and emotional problems long after their treatment has ended.

Efforts made by the government and the NHS in the past 10 years in particular mean that survival rates have improved and mortality rates have fallen, but the gap in survival rates between England and the best European countries has not been closed. Recent data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) revealed that for all cancers combined, the UK ranked 16th out of the 34 OECD countries when it came to death rates. It also had a higher cancer incidence (269.4 cases per 100,000 people) than the OECD average of 260.9. OECD includes advanced countries such as the U.S.A, France and Germany, in addition to the UK, but also but also emerging countries such as Chile, Turkey and Mexico.

Peter Johnson, of Cancer Research UK, commented that although there had been improvements in many areas of cancer diagnosis and treatment, part of the reason for the figures from OECD is that the incidence of cancer is increasing because people are living longer. Scientists were at "an amazing watershed" in understanding cancers, but lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking, avoiding excessive exposure to the sun, taking more exercise and drinking less alcohol were all helpful in reducing the risks of developing cancer, he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

Local initiatives include training for GPs in recognising cancer symptoms and advertising campaigns to raise general awareness of specific cancer types also.

But is there a New Year resolution here for you and me, as well as room for NHS improvement?

Some really easy to make sweets– give them as presents or just eat them!

<p>Chocolate Mint Crisps</p> <p>1lb/450g plain dark chocolate 8oz Demerara sugar 2 teaspoons peppermint essence</p> <p>Chop the chocolate into even-sized pieces.</p> <p>Put into a heat-proof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water. Allow it to melt.</p> <p>Stir together all the ingredients and spread over silicone paper.</p> <p>Cut as required when cool.</p>	<p>Dipped Fruits (healthiest option)</p> <p>1lb/450g of strawberries or grapes 4oz/125g of best bitter chocolate ½ oz/12.5g of unsalted butter</p> <p>Clean and dry the fruit thoroughly, but don't remove the hulls or stalks.</p> <p>Melt the chocolate and butter in the microwave on High for 1-2 minutes or over a pan of hot water, stirring until smooth. Cool slightly and dip fruit into chocolate to half coat.</p> <p>Cool on greaseproof paper and then place in tiny cases.</p> <p>Sprinkle with icing sugar if you wish.</p>
<p>Apricot and Gingernut Logs</p> <p>Logs ½ cup of unsalted peanuts ½ cup of crunchy peanut butter 75g dried apricots 50 g glace cherries 2 tablespoons icing sugar</p> <p>Topping 2 tablespoons flaked almonds and 50g dark chocolate</p> <p>Place all log ingredients into food processor and mix to a smooth paste.</p> <p>Take tablespoons of mixture and roll into log shapes.</p> <p>Lay almonds on the top, overlapping. Drizzle melted chocolate over the top in zig zag and refrigerate till firm.</p>	<p>Marzipan Dates</p> <p>1 box of dates 100g marzipan Caster sugar Melted chocolate Almonds if liked</p> <p>Remove the stone from the dates.</p> <p>Fill the cavity with a small piece of marzipan. Top with an almond, if liked.</p> <p>Dip half of the dates in chocolate and the other half in caster sugar.</p> 
<p>Quiz answers</p> <p>1. New York 2. Pacific Ocean 3. The polar bear is twice the size. 4. Poseidon 5. Brown 6. 1960 7. The Observer 8. Westminster Abbey 9. Frostbite 10. A tree</p>	

H.U.G. News – read all about it

Get-togethers were held in the Academy at the Great Western Hospital in the middle of the months October and November.

We've been back to the Blunsdon Arms for coffee and lunch in late October and early December.

- Craft sessions continued on the second Monday of the month, when the crafters were available.

1. Get-Togethers

Attendances have been on the low side recently. We hope to see the members who have been unwell or undergoing treatment again soon.

Note that there is no HUG get-together at the Hospital in January, because of lack of meeting room availability on the second or third Thursday. Changing the day would have meant that some of our regulars would not have been able to come, so we decided to miss a month. However, other activities will continue in January.

2. Income, Spending and Events

We have received donations totalling £284 from the family of a patient, with the request that it should be spent on items that would be useful for the Day Therapy Centre in Osprey. We are purchasing one heat pad for approval and more will be obtained when there is confirmation that the specification is acceptable. Further ideas are being sought from patients and staff.

The supply of thermometers purchased in January for giving away to new patients is now running out and we are making arrangements to purchase another batch. These thermometers allow patients to check themselves for high temperatures which indicate an infection. With the HUG name on they also help to promote the group.

Our participation in the Charity Sale at Christ Church in November raised £65 for HUG funds. Just one table is available to each charity, which meant that we could only display a small selection of what we have available for sale. In addition there were not as many customers this year, with the result that the profit is down.

Our next sales date at the Hospital is Monday 12th December, before you read this. On the previous date we made a profit of around £40. We have arranged quarterly dates for next year also.

We have a drop in session at our meeting on the day of Magazine issue, 15th December, with festive snacks and non-alcoholic drinks.

Our "Christmas" meal will again be in January, when it's easier to accommodate everyone's other commitments. We intend to go back to the Blunsdon House Hotel, where we greatly enjoyed their carvery choices early this year.

Grand Day Out for Patients

The day out for patients, to be paid for by the sponsorship money raised by Jenny Yallop, a Wednesday volunteer on Day Therapy, will be on Monday 16th April 2012. We shall be going to Evesham Country Park. If you know anyone who has finished treatment long enough ago not to be at serious risk of infection, do let Margaret or Irene know.



Entitlement to Treatment posters

You may have seen these posters regarding who is entitled to automatic NHS treatment appearing around the hospital. These have been produced to clarify which patient groups can receive the funding in general terms. They do not affect the right to emergency and lifesaving care, if needed.

Chemotherapy Patient Talks

New patient talks for those about to undergo chemotherapy are currently being run as group sessions, lead by the Lead Cancer Nurse Alison Koster. She is being supported by two patient members of the User Involvement Group. This is a good idea since it allows patients to meet others who are going through the same experiences and those who have already gone through it, as well as saving time for Clinical Nurse Specialists.

We have heard of the possibility of these talks being replaced by DVDs handed out to patients. While we appreciate that a DVD could cover many of the frequently asked questions, we think that new patients should continue to receive face to face information.

Snack Offerings

On the Tuesday of Christmas week, Chonette and Irene will be handing out delicious little home-made snacks to patients in Osprey. These were well received when we previously did the same. We hope to meet some of our readers then.

Christmas gifts for in-patients

HUG is once again supplying bags of useful goodies as a Christmas gift to patients in Dove Ward over Christmas. These will include wet wipes, pens, notebooks and notelets, sweets with a HUG mug, as well as a leaflet and a copy of the HUG Magazine.

Just to let them know that we are thinking of patients who have to be hospitalised at that time.