

HUG MAGAZINE



June 2014

(issued during the last month of each quarter)

For HAEMATOLOGY and ONCOLOGY patients, their families and friends being treated in Cancer Services areas or under review



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HUG Get-togethers

We have suspended meetings at the hospital in favour of coffee mornings at other locations. We shall be meeting at the Blunsdon Arms pub, on Thamesdown Drive from 11am onwards on the second Monday of each month.

Further get-togethers and venues will be arranged on a month by month basis on dates to suit attendees.

Contact us for more details.

Known dates for 3rd quarter of 2014 are the 2nd Mondays of months

14th July 2014

11th August 2014 and

8th September 2014

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 Coffee Mornings and Craft Sessions (as new stock for sale is required)**
- **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 a Patient Information DVD, Resuscitation, Radiotherapy for Swindon, home delivery of chemotherapy**
- **Fund-raising to provide practical help with purchases which have included thermometers, travel bands, mugs, slippers, gel bags and heat pads, when suggested by clinical staff, patients or carers.**
 - ✓ **Items for sale at any time: chemo hats made of a silk/wool mix in a choice of colours and styles and our personalised mugs and teddy bears. Contact us for more details.**
- **Maintaining a website and making leaflets available to promote the group and advertise our activities**
- **Producing the HUG Magazine quarterly and leaving copies in Cancer Services areas, providing direct to members and posting on the website.**
- **We have a stall behind the atrium at the hospital, on a regular basis. Dates known for the remainder of 2014 are Thursday Monday 16th June, Tuesday 15th July, Tuesday 5th August, Thursday 18th September, between 9am and 4.30 pm.**

INTERESTING HEALTH-RELATED NEWS

Cancer stem cells

Scientists have found the first “conclusive evidence” of the existence of cancer stem cells in humans, in a discovery which could put an end to years of scientific controversy and pave the way for more effective cancer treatments which could attack the disease “at the root”.

In a new study published in the journal *Cancer Cell*, researchers said they had tracked gene mutations responsible for a form of blood cancer back to a distinct set of cells which they say are at the root of the cancer’s spread. Researchers at Oxford University and Sweden’s Karolinska Institutet said that their findings were “a vitally important step” in our understanding of how cancers developed and how best to treat them.

The study was carried out in a group of patients with a blood disease which commonly develops into leukaemia, and can only technically prove the existence of cancer stem cells for this particular condition, but the scientists said that “similar” cancer stem cells were likely to lie behind the development of other cancers. For more information see

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/first-evidence-of-cancer-stem-cells-brings-hope-for-possible-future-treatment-9380201.html>

The Independent 14 May 2014

Astra Zeneca new cancer drugs

AstraZeneca is providing an update on three new cancer drugs update that were at the centre of its recent successful defence against the takeover bid by Pfizer, at the American Society of Clinical Oncology's (ASCO) annual meeting at the beginning of June.

The clinical data to be presented are for its non-small cell lung cancer treatments AZD9291 and MEDI4736, which are showing promising clinical trial results and the results of an intermediate phase II study conducted by the US National Cancer Institute on an ovarian cancer treatment. Refer to

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/may/30/astrazeneca-showcase-new-cancer-drugs-us-conference>

The Guardian 30 May 2014

Immunotherapy treatment for advanced melanoma and lung cancer

Details of clinical trials of the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab were also given at The American Society of Clinical Oncology’s meeting. It is being tested by patients with advanced melanoma and lung cancer. Consultant David Chao of the Royal Free Hospital in London reported favourable results in extending the lives of terminally ill patients by greatly shrinking tumours. Some 69% of patients survived for more than a year. Longer term survival prospects are not yet known. The drug is expected to be available in the UK in less than 2 years, although the cost is still unclear. Refer to

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-27674658>

BBC News 2nd June 2014

Selfies without Make-up for Cancer Research

There was a time when I wouldn't leave the house without make-up, but I was probably "cured" by early mornings with not enough time to do everything that needed to be done before rushing out of the house. Taking my own photograph without make-up or indeed with it, is not something I'm ever likely to do. Clearly I'm not "on trend".

Millions of people have posted no make-up photographs of themselves on the net in recent weeks. The power of the internet and in this case social media sites Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, is astonishing. An incredible £8million (at the last count, but it may be more by now) has been raised in no time at all for Cancer Research by posting "no make-up selfies at [#nomakeupselfie](#)". The money will be used to help to fund clinical trials aimed at bringing treatments to patients faster.

Cancer Research did not start the campaign, but it is still unprecedented rise in donations via texts. Indeed no one actually knows how the trend started or whether the people who have posted pictures really understand the need for more cancer treatments. Celebrities do appear to have been the first to get involved, so perhaps it was all about the right kind of publicity.

Regardless of the reasons, this has been a surprisingly lucrative windfall.

Skin Cancer

Sometimes we have a nagging doubt that we may have a suspicious mole or skin lesions, but it seems so minor that we don't like to bother the doctor.

We have recently found a website with excellent photographs of what to look out for:

https://www.skinhealthuk.com/skin-cancer-information/skin-cancer-pictures?gclid=CJ2u7_fqyb4CFebItAod324Atw

SkinHealth UK is a commercial organisation, offering skin cancer screening services, but there is plenty of useful information on the website, for free!

Put your nagging doubts to rest, or use the picture to confirm that you may need to take further advice.

The Cancer Research Science Blog aims to set the record straight on 10 cancer myths. Driven by the evidence, it describes what the reality of research actually shows to be true.

- [Myth 1: Cancer is a man-made, modern disease](#)

Cancer has existed as long as humans. The simple fact is that more people are living long enough to develop cancer because of our success in tackling infectious diseases and other historical causes of death such as malnutrition. It's perfectly normal for DNA damage in our cells to build up as we age, and such damage can lead to cancer developing. We're also now able to diagnose cancers more accurately, thanks to advances in screening, imaging and pathology.

It is true that some modern lifestyle factors, such as smoking, poor diet and air pollution can be linked to certain cancers.

- [Myth 2: Superfoods prevent cancer](#)

No one food can prevent cancer. The steady accumulation of evidence over several decades points to a simple, but not very newsworthy fact that the best way to reduce your risk of cancer is by a series of long-term healthy behaviours, such as **not smoking, keeping active, keeping a healthy body weight and cutting back on alcohol.**

- [Myth 3: 'Acidic' diets cause cancer](#)

Cancer cells can't live in an overly alkaline environment, **but neither can any of the other cells in your body.**

- [Myth 4: Cancer has a sweet tooth](#)

All our cells, cancerous or not, use glucose for energy. Because cancer cells are usually growing very fast compared with healthy cells, they have a particularly high demand for this fuel. They also use glucose and produce energy in a different way from healthy cells. While it's very sensible to limit sugary foods as part of an overall healthy diet and to avoid putting on weight, it doesn't mean that sugary foods specifically feed cancer.

- [Myth 5: Cancer is a fungus – and sodium bicarbonate is the cure](#)

There's evidence that high doses of sodium bicarbonate can lead to serious – even fatal – consequences.

[Some studies](#) suggest that sodium bicarbonate can affect cancers transplanted into mice or cells grown in the lab, by neutralising the acidity in the microenvironment immediately around a tumour. And researchers in the US are running a [small clinical trial](#) investigating whether sodium bicarbonate capsules can help to reduce cancer pain and to find the maximum dose that can be tolerated, rather than testing whether it has any effect on tumours. There have been no published clinical trials of sodium bicarbonate as a treatment for cancer.

- [Myth 6: There's a miracle cancer cure...](#)

The advice is to be wary of anything labelled a 'miracle cure', especially if people are trying to sell it to you. Wikipedia has [this excellent list of ineffective cancer treatments](#) that are often touted as miracle cures, which is worth a browse. If you want to know about the **scientific evidence about cannabis, cannabinoids and cancer** – a topic we're often asked about, refer to

<http://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2012/07/25/cannabis-cannabinoids-and-cancer-the-evidence-so-far/>.

- [Myth 7: ...And Big Pharma are suppressing it](#)

There's no doubt that the pharmaceutical industry has a number of issues with transparency and clinical trials that it needs to address. It simply doesn't make sense that pharmaceutical companies would want to suppress a potential cure.

- [Myth 8: Cancer treatment kills more than it cures](#)

Treatments that are designed to kill cancer cells will inevitably affect healthy cells too.

And sometimes, sadly, treatment doesn't work. We know that it's very difficult to treat late-stage cancer that has spread throughout the body, and while treatment can provide relief from symptoms and prolong life, it's not going to be a cure for very advanced cancers.

- [Myth 9: We've made no progress in fighting cancer](#)

Cancer Research helped to make the film "The Enemy Within: 50 years of fighting cancer". You can find the hour-long documentary at <http://vimeo.com/54898062>. It highlights how far we've come from the early days of chemotherapy in the 50s and 60s to the latest 'smart' drugs and pinpoint-accurate radiotherapy.

There's still a long way to go and progress has been much slower for some cancers, such as lung, brain, pancreatic and oesophageal cancers.

- [Myth 10: Sharks don't get cancer](#)

Yes they do!

If you'd like to read all the arguments, go to

<http://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2014/03/24/dont-believe-the-hype-10-persistent-cancer-myths-debunked/>

Non-Emergency Patient Transport

Since the beginning of this year, Non-Emergency Patient Transport for some NHS appointments has been provided by Arriva. This service is available to people whose medical condition prevents them from travelling by any other means.

Arriva has produced an information booklet and answers to frequently asked questions. There are links to those, and to the Department of Health Leaflet explaining how you can get help with transport costs on the Healthwatch Swindon website at:

<http://www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk/news/non-emergency-patient-transport-nepts-some-nhs-appointments>.

Non-Emergency Patient Transport is booked by ringing Arriva on 0845 600 6068.

Money can't buy happiness, but it makes misery easier to live with.

Fridge magnets

If you can't live in hope then you can't live anywhere!



If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.



 A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

A bank will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.



You only need a parachute to skydive twice.



 True friendship comes when the silence between two people is comfortable.

H.U.G. News – read all about it

- Get-togethers which used to take place regularly at the Great Western Hospital have now been suspended
- Coffee mornings and lunches have continued on a regular basis.
- Group craft sessions have not re-started, but we intend to recommence when our stocks are running low. We are still making items at home to sell in the meantime.

1. Get-Togethers

We are meeting on the second Monday of each month at the Blunsdon Arms pub, on Thamesdown Drive, for coffee or tea from 11am onwards, throughout 2014. A lunch afterwards is optional.

Further additional dates and locations are often arranged on a month by month basis depending on members' availability.

We are finding that attendances are better away from the hospital which confirms the theory that patients don't want to go there any oftener than they have to!

2. Income and Expenditure

We have had just one sale of craft items, jewellery, cards and pottery behind the atrium in the Great Western since the last issue of the HUG Magazine. A profit of £61 was made at the May sale and a further small profit was made at the Lechlade Duck Race.

We shall be selling again at the GWH on the 16th of June, and at the Dragon Boat Race at Coate Water on Sunday 29th June. Other opportunities will be taken up as they present themselves.

We have been very fortunate in receiving generous donations of knitwear to sell, most of them from members of the Knit & Natter club at Lambourn Library. A worthwhile surplus had built up in the refreshments money and this was used to buy a selection of wool to be used for charity purposes. Keen knitters then took to their needles to give us a lovely selection for our forthcoming sales.

We have just agreed to give a donation of £1,000 to the Dove Ward Appetito meals project. For more details about this venture, refer to page 10.

3. Activities

We shall be discussing the venue for our summer outing when we meet up next week. This usually takes place in September, when things are a bit quieter. It is usually a good opportunity to catch up with old friends of the group, some of whom are back at work, but still like to keep in touch.

Clinical Psychology Research Project

We have been approached by EH, a final year trainee clinical psychologist at the University of Bath. She is undertaking a project on emotional well-being following the completion of cancer treatment, in collaboration with the Great Western Hospital, Swindon.

The study is aimed at understanding more about the anxiety that some people who have completed treatment for cancer with curative intent may experience about their health. They would like to find out about what factors might affect whether people experience high levels of anxiety. Adults between the ages of 18-80 who have received treatment for cancer in England and are still receiving care from their hospital can take part. Participants should be in remission, but you can still take part if you are having ongoing hormone treatment.

Approval for the study has been given by the Department of Psychology's Ethics Committee at the University of Bath and an NHS Research Ethics Committee.

You would be invited to complete a set of questionnaires about different aspects of your wellbeing at two different time points. The information would be confidential and remain anonymous. Results will be used to increase the understanding in this area and will contribute to the researcher's thesis for a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. Ultimately the researcher hopes to submit the study to academic journals for publication with possible presentation at conferences.

If you think you might be interested in taking part you can contact the student for more information by telephone, on

01225 385745.

Do Not Resuscitate

Our input is also being sought on a Do Not Resuscitate initiative documentation and recording system which aims to make sure that a patient's wishes are known to all his or her healthcare professionals and applied for the qualifying health condition. This would include hospital doctors and nurses, para-medics and the patient's GP.

Some of us are meeting next week (13th June) with a Resuscitation Officer, who is a member of the team which is looking at this sensitive subject. Patient consultation is regarded as an important part of the decision making.

GWH Choir to fund-raise for breast cancer appeal

Staff at Great Western Hospital are getting their voices in tune for a special gala concert to raise money for the breast cancer intra-operative radiotherapy treatment appeal.

The GWH Choir, led by **Jules Addison, a Choirmaster and Music Producer** from Wiltshire, will be joining four other local choirs from Wiltshire to sing at a special concert on Saturday 28 June at St Andrew's Church in Chippenham from 7.30pm-9.30pm. Tickets are £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

As well as the GWH Choir, the concert will also feature four local choirs: Southgate House Choir with members of Wiltshire's Clinical Commissioning Group, Pewsey Belles Ladies Choir, Adlib Vocal Ensemble from Bath and Schola, a chamber choir from Devizes.

To buy tickets online visit www.julesaddison.co.uk or contact 01225 302143.



Dove Ward Appetito Meals Equipment Appeal

If you have received intensive chemotherapy or other treatment in Dove Ward, you may wish to help towards the cost of the equipment required to store, heat and serve Appetito meals to patients. These are frozen meals, similar to what can be delivered to your home. Having them on the ward allows patients to eat a little of what they fancy, when they fancy it, regardless of normal meal times and choices. The equipment is already in use but the fund-raising is just about half way towards the target of around £6,000.

If you wish to donate to this cause, you should make cheques payable to Dove Ward Charitable Funds.

Look Good, Feel Better

Surprisingly, the Look Good, Feel Better pampering sessions for cancer patients are currently undersubscribed. Sessions consist of cleansing and make up to suit your condition and skin type. If the free charity service is not used by enough patients, we may lose it.

Dates for the remainder of the year are 17th June, 15th July, 12th August, 16th September, 14th October and 18th November. For more information speak to a member of your health care team or telephone Cancer Services between 1pm and 4pm, Monday to Friday, on 01793 646152 or 605859.