

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

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Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE MAY MEETING

There were four new members at the May meeting, two of them with their wives. A warm welcome to these new members, and I hope that they will find our group useful and will want to attend further group meetings.

The May meeting featured a talk by Dr. Charlotte Robinson of the Radiography unit at RBH. Charlotte introduced herself and said that she is a General Radiologist with a sub-specialty interest in gastrointestinal radiology, including small bowel, specialist colonic imaging (CT colonography), and pelvic imaging.

Charlotte started by informing the group that her role had changed over the years with more women now trained and more interaction with patients. She described the typical pathway from symptoms to treatment, and presented a graph that showed that between 1975 and 2008, the rate of incidence of prostate cancer has increased by more than three times, but the mortality rate has remained virtually unchanged. Improvements in scanning techniques and computer developments have had a part in this result, and Charlotte showed samples of various types of scans, including x-rays, ultrasound, CT, PET CT, MRI and mpMRI. It was evident from some of the slides shown, that the improvements in techniques, in particular the mpMRI (multi parametric magnetic resonance imaging) have greatly improved the detection of prostate cancers and enabled more accurately targeted biopsies and treatments, however she recognised that these screening will not save lives in themselves but enables stratification of the risks. There are limitations with the mpMRI as it is very noisy, patients have to lie absolutely still for 20-30 minutes and anyone with a pacemaker or recent metal replacement surgery e.g. hip replacement, cannot have a scan due to the magnetic field. The scans take a long time to interpret so are a drain of radiographer

resources. There is however, an ongoing business case to allow a greater use of mpMRI for new patients.

There were many questions from the audience, which proved that this topic had created a great deal of audience interest.

Charlotte was presented with a gift of appreciation for her time in giving the talk.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

THE JUNE GROUP MEETING

This will be on Friday 5th June and the speaker will be Mr. Paul Hadway from the RBH. His talk will include erectile dysfunction and the clinic that he operates for this.

PCSF AGM and CONFERENCE

On the 16th June 2015 the PCSF (Prostate Cancer Support Federation, usually known as 'Tackle') will hold their annual conference and AGM. The event will feature two speakers, whose subjects will be:

- 'Stampede' - the first results of a trial of combined therapies for metastatic prostate cancer.
- Prostate cancer issues from the Primary Care perspective.

This annual meeting is free for all members of support groups, and will be held in the Nicolson Building in Edgbaston, Birmingham. Some of our members have attended previous sessions and found them very interesting and a useful way of collecting information and meeting members of other groups. Full details of the event including attendance booking and travel can be found in the following web page. Please attend if

possible, I am sure that you will find it of great value.

<http://tackleprostate.org/2015-agm.php>

The closing date for registration to this conference is the 2nd June, so if you would like to attend please register before this date.

THE JULY GROUP MEETING

This will be on the 3rd July. Details will be available later.

SUMMER SOCIAL

The Summer Social will be in the evening of 15th July 2015 at the Calcot Hotel, the same place as last year, which was a very suitable and popular venue. You will receive more details later on such things as the menu.

RACE FOR LIFE

This will take place on the 26th July 2015 in the Newbury showground, and we will run an awareness stand there. It is a fund raising event on behalf of Cancer Research UK so is for a very worthwhile cause. It is a mainly a run of 5km, although walking and dawdling are adequate! The theme of the event is 'Boys Beating Cancer' as the participants are male only. Of course all members' families are welcome to come and support them. You can find more detail of the event in the following two web pages. Please come along for a fun day out in aid of a good cause.

<http://www.boysbeatingcancer.org/about>

<http://www.boysbeatingcancer.org/event-information>

A RECENT REPORT - PLASMA THERAPY

Thank you to the member who sent a newspaper report to me, that mentioned a new form of prostate cancer treatment, known as cold plasma therapy. The report was published in the Daily Mail Online Health section, and was quite short stating:

'A blast of cold plasma - a mixture of gases which hold an electrical charge - can kill off early prostate cancer cells. It might also avoid the problems of resistance to treatment that can occur with other cancer therapies, new research suggests.

Current cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, trigger apoptosis - natural cell death - but cells can become resistant to them. Researchers at the University of York suggest there may be an alternative.

With low-temperature plasma therapy, a tiny needle fires the gas and is used to target specific cells. The scientists, writing in the British Journal of Cancer, said the treatment leads to cell death through a process called necrosis, where the cells are ruptured in a way that could make it more difficult for the body to develop resistance to therapies'.

Some more background and details can be seen in the following web page, where it is stated that if trials are successful, the plasma treatment could become available in 10 to 15 years time:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2015/research/prostate-cancer-treatment/>

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