

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 94: September 2019

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Chairman Chris Addison welcomed all to the meeting including four new members. Richard Joyes mentioned the Refreshments Coordinator role that he carries out - more information later in this newsletter.

Chris mentioned the PSA testing event that is organised by the Reading Lions. This is an annual event at which men can receive a free PSA blood test and each man will be advised later by letter if it is considered that the result indicates that further action is needed. The event will be held at the Rutherford Cancer Centre at 3 Collegiate Square, Shinfield on the 16th November 2019. This is a very popular occasion and last year the event was almost overwhelmed by the quantity of men requesting the test. This year the test will be by appointment and further information and a booking form can be found at this web page: <https://www.therutherford.com/reading-lions-free-prostate-psa-test-event-2019/>

The speaker at the September meeting was Michelle Hunt of the Continence Advisory Service. I am very grateful to member Andrew for writing the following report of the meeting:

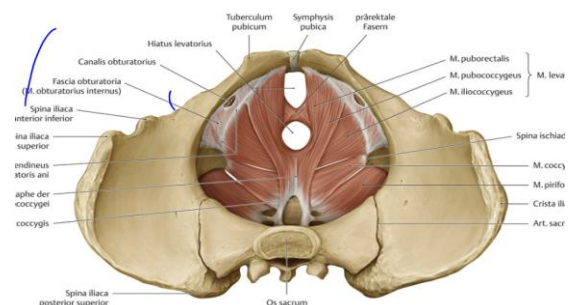
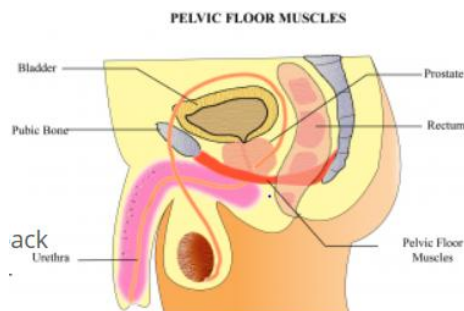
The service covers all cases of incontinence, including Prostate Cancer. It deals both directly with patients, and providing support/education to healthcare workers.

Services are offered by many routes, including specialist clinics across Berkshire (you can attend any of them, near home, near work, whatever is convenient), and telephone support.

Patients can directly refer themselves – no need to go through GPs. If you do go through GP, they should refer you to the Continence Advisory Service.

Service operates a prescription service (with much faster turnaround than most GPs), and a prompt home delivery service. Some meeting attendees commented on how fast products arrive when ordered.

Pelvic Floor Muscles



Michelle went through the anatomy of the pelvic floor muscles. Pelvic floor muscles are used as an extra check on leakage during movement, jumping, etc. Pelvic floor can be quite easily damaged – most commonly that's seen in women due to childbirth. However, straining, and many prostate procedures can damage the muscles too.

Michelle went through the Pelvic Floor Exercises as the members sat clenching theirs. Exercise can be done seated, standing, and lying down. Exercise to regain full strength, and to compensate for loss of bladder control. Like any muscle, be careful not to overdo the exercise, and be very careful if you have a catheter in. When a catheter is removed, it normally takes a while for sphincters to shrink back, so expect significant leakage initially. Learn to instinctively contract your Pelvic Floor as you stand up and perform other movements that make you leak.

Once control is gained, you can reduce Pelvic Floor Exercises, but don't stop.

Bladder Retraining

Avoid going “*just in case*”. It trains the bladder to not expect to hold much, and makes you want to go earlier. Try to let the bladder fill.

Some things are bladder irritants, and may make you want to go before you fill your bladder, which is not good during bladder retaining:

- Caffeine (don't suddenly stop, or will get withdrawal symptoms)
- Concentrated Urine (not drinking enough)
- Citrus Drinks
- Blackcurrant
- Alcohol
- Fizzy drinks
- Urine infection



Michelle during her talk

In case of getting up to pee at night:

- Avoid drinking large amounts in the evening. (Sucking an ice cube can be refreshing.)
- Check that you take diuretic medications in the morning, as they cause you to pee.
- If you have poor kidney function (which slows removal of diuretics), you might need a smaller dose so they have been removed by night time.

Your body generates an anti-diuretic hormone over night which slows the kidneys generating urine so you don't need to wake up to pee, but as you age, this reduces and can cause more trips to the toilet overnight.

NEXT GROUP MEETING 4th OCTOBER 2019

The October meeting of the RPCSG will be on Friday 4th October at 6:30 p.m. in St Andrews church hall. Beverley and Tessa Martin will answer your questions concerning any aspect of prostate cancer and there will be plenty of opportunity for open discussion.

In case Beverley and Tessa need to do any research to answer your questions they will be pleased to receive questions in advance of the meeting. Please email your questions or requests for information to me and I will pass these on to Beverley - the more questions the better! All questions will be answered anonymously so no members names will be mentioned. You will of course be able to raise new questions on the evening. If you have questions but are unable to attend the meeting please send them to me anyway as I will put a summary of the meeting into a later newsletter.

REFRESHMENTS CO-ORDINATOR

A much appreciated feature at our group meetings is the serving of refreshments and biscuits. We rely on volunteers to do the serving and we thought it very desirable to set up a new role of refreshments co-ordinator to ensure that we always have enough people to serve the drinks. Richard Joyes talked about this at the September meeting and said that he has taken on this role. He is trying to get a rota together of volunteers who would be able to help with the teas and coffees at one or other of the group meetings. October is covered but we need more people from November onwards. We need at least two people for this job at each meeting. If we could have at least 10 volunteers, then each person would have to do it no more than twice a year. The Christmas and Summer Socials are covered by outside caterers. If you feel you could help in this way, please contact Richard Joyes by phone (mobile no. 07793 092194) or email (sundancer297@gmail.com) or talk to him at a group meeting. Thanks in advance to anyone who can help in this way.

RPCSG WALKS

The October walk will be on Tuesday 8th October and will start at the Cunning Man pub in Burghfield Road, Burghfield. You can park at no charge in the Cunning Man car park where the walk will start at 10:30 a.m. The postcode is RG30 3RB. The walk will be along a canal into the centre of Reading where there will be a stop for lunch or refreshments. The return will be by a number 2 bus from Reading back to the Cunning Man, so remember to bring your bus pass if you have one. The walk will be very pleasant with varied scenery.

The distance walked will be about five miles. If you have any query about this walk you are welcome to telephone Richard Brown on 07973 662925.

PREVIOUS WALK.

The September walk was attended by 14 people and was a most enjoyable occasion with good weather and welcome refreshments at a cafe in Goring.

Some photographs taken during the walk:



A remarkable hill-top view towards Goring



Refreshments at a cafe in Goring



EXERCISE SESSIONS

This is a reminder of the exercise sessions that are held by Tessa Higgins of the Macmillan Trust. The sessions are open to all of our members and several regularly attend and find the sessions very useful and enjoyable. Exercise has been proved to be very valuable after treatment. The venue is:

Rivermead Leisure Complex
Richfield Avenue
Reading
RG1 8EQ

No need to book, just turn up.

The sessions are every Wednesday between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Attendance and car parking are free. Remember to register your car with Reception on arrival otherwise you may be charged for parking.

A REVOLUTIONARY NEW PROSTATE CANCER TEST

A new simple blood test for prostate cancer was recently announced in the press. The current PSA test procedure is not entirely satisfactory as there can be a significant number of 'false positives' that lead to unnecessary biopsies, also there can be false negatives. It has been estimated that as many as three quarters of biopsies find no cancer traces. Furthermore a biopsy has been the only way of determining the Gleason score and the new test is able to provide some information on the aggressiveness of prostate cancer.

The new test is known as the Parsortix system and will be used alongside the PSA measurement. The new test looks for early cancer cells known as CTCs (Circulating Tumour Cells). It is claimed that the accuracy of the new test when combined with PSA measurement is better than 90% and will prevent a substantial number of unnecessary biopsies. Further, the number and type of CTCs gives an indication of the aggressiveness of the cancer cells.

In a recent study published in the Journal Of Urology the new test was applied to a sample of more than 200 prostate patients and the new test correctly identified those men with prostate cancer. The test could be available on the NHS within about three years.

The link below is one of several that can be found online:

<https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/1176403/prostate-cancer-breakthrough-news-blood-test>

This link gives some technical detail of the Parsortix system:

<https://www.slideshare.net/AndrewNewland/angle-brochure>

Steve Parkinson
Newsletter Editor.
NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com

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This newsletter may refer to named providers and their products or services, and such reference expresses no inference upon any aspect of any provider's business, services or products, and expresses no recommendation or preference for any such products or services.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

4th OCTOBER 2019

The group meeting will be 'Open' with questions answered by Beverley and Tessa.

8th OCTOBER 2019

The RPCSG walk from the 'Cunning Man' to Reading.

1st NOVEMBER 2019

The guest speaker at the November meeting will be Kate Slater from the Macmillan Trust.