

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 107: November 2020

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE NOVEMBER MEETING.

Our November RPCSG meeting was held using Zoom with the guest speaker being Mark Little, a radiologist at the RBH. He gave an excellent talk on scanning systems and related them to prostate cancer. He presented the talk with a set of slides and the following is a report on the content of his talk.

Mark first described the historic pathway for prostate cancer treatment, which was that an elevated PSA was almost always followed by a biopsy. These sometimes found no evidence of cancer and thus the biopsy was unnecessary and carried the risk of infection. If the biopsy found cancer then a choice of treatment would be made. The choices were Active Surveillance, Surgery or Radiotherapy.

The use of MRI in cancer diagnosis is increasing, in particular mpMRI (multi parametric MRI). Mark showed a slide containing mpMRI scans of a prostate with different weightings of the scan parameters. These showed that the scans can accurately detect the size and location of a tumour within the prostate. Should a biopsy be needed after the scan then the biopsy can be targeted at the areas indicated by the MRI scan.

Mark described a trial known as PROMIS that investigated the effectiveness of mpMRI scans of the prostate. It found that the MRI scan identified more than 90% of patients who had clinically important cancers, compared to only 48% identified by a biopsy alone. The trial recommended that an MRI scan should be carried out before a biopsy, and that this would allow at least one man in four to avoid an unnecessary biopsy. It would also enable Active Surveillance to be safely used in some cases.

The current pathway at RBH includes rapid access MRI results enabling a biopsy to be carried on the same day as the MRI. The biopsy can be targeted in line with the MRI scans.

Mark described recent work that he is involved in, known as Prostate Artery Embolisation (PAE). This is a minimally invasive procedure whereby small particles are injected into the arteries supplying the prostate that reduce the blood supply to the prostate. More than 1,000 men have undergone this treatment and found an improved quality of life and urinary flow rate. PAE can reduce the prostate volume and relieve the symptoms in cases of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). He said that at present embolisation is not used for treating tumours, it is for relieving the symptoms of an enlarged prostate gland, or bleeding.

One of the factors taken into account is PSA density, that is the ratio of PSA measurement to the volume of the prostate. All prostates vary in size and an enlarged prostate will naturally produce a higher PSA level, and so the PSA density is considered in the interpretation of a raised PSA level.

Mark finished with a set of conclusions:

- mpMRI should be the standard of care in cases of suspected prostate cancer.
- The PROMIS trial will avoid 25% of unnecessary biopsies, identify more than 90% of clinically important cancer, and improve biopsy targeting.
- PAE is a minimally invasive treatment for BPH.

Mark was thanked for his very informative talk.

NEXT RPCSG ZOOM MEETING - 4th December 2020

Traditionally our Christmas meeting in December consists of a buffet meal in St Andrews hall with a quiz and raffle and was a very enjoyable occasion. Like so many other events, this buffet meal cannot go ahead due to the rules around the coronavirus isolation. We will instead hold a Zoom meeting on the 4th December that will be in two parts:

The meeting will first feature a 'Question and Answer' session. This is a great opportunity to have answers to any questions on any aspect of prostate cancer. It will be appreciated if you will send any questions in advance to our support email address of rpcsgmedical@outlook.com. The sooner the better, please, as this will give Beverley the chance to do any research that may be needed. Answers will be given anonymously by Beverley and others and possibly Tessa Martin will be present. The whole meeting will be interactive so you can raise new questions or comments, and contribute at the meeting.

The second part will be a quiz that we have not tried before but will be most entertaining.

We would like to have a festive air at the meeting so anything Christmassy that you can do or wear will be great.

RPCSG DECEMBER WALK

The December walk in normal circumstances would fall on Tuesday 2nd December but this is the day that the current lockdown may end. If lockdown is not extended then we will consider a walk on Tuesday 8th December. I will let you know as soon as possible, as to whether we are able to hold a walk on the 8th December.

COFFEE MORNINGS

I am sorry to report that due to the recent changes in the social rules for Covid-19, we can no longer meet at coffee mornings. We held a virtual coffee morning in November coffee with eight members attending that was appreciated by the members. We will resume coffee mornings as soon as possible but there is no information at present of when that might be.

JUNE GILES

I am very sad to report to you the passing of June Giles, the wife of long-standing member Peter Giles. Peter was a founding member of the group that was established in 2007 and he served for many years as a committee member with June frequently helping to serve refreshments at the kitchen counter. We are very grateful to June and Peter for their contributions and send our sincere condolences to Peter.

Steve Parkinson
Newsletter Editor.
NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter does not offer medical advice. Nothing contained in the newsletter is intended to constitute professional advice for medical diagnosis or treatment or to advocate or recommend the purchase of any product or use of any service or guarantee the credentials or appropriateness of any health care provider. Members are strongly advised to consult with an appropriate professional for specific advice tailored to their situation.

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.

Friday 4th December will be the Christmas Zoom group meeting with your questions answered, plus a quiz.

Tuesday 8th December if covid rules allow, will be an RPCSG walk.

Friday 1st January 2021 To be confirmed - will be an informal group social meeting by Zoom without a guest speaker.