

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

Issue 115: July 2021

Website: www.rpcsg.org.uk

THE JULY MEETING.

I was not able to attend the meeting in July due to being on a holiday, and Beverley very kindly made some extensive notes on the meeting as below. I am very grateful to her for this.

Philip Charlesworth, Consultant Urologist at the RBH very kindly stepped in to talk after our planned speaker had to withdraw following a family bereavement.

A couple of questions had been asked by email and Mr Charlesworth started by replying to these. The first question asked about the use of colour in surgery to ensure all the cancer has been removed. Philip explained that this is a process called NeuroSafe. It involves using a dye to mark the margins of the prostate. Samples are then frozen and immediately given to a pathologist to analyse for cancer cells. This process is used in the hospital in London but not generally. It requires a lot of infrastructure. There needs to be a lab next door to the theatre, it uses very expensive equipment and requires experienced staff to be available. This is not possible in most NHS hospitals. Philip was asked how often he goes back to remove more of the prostate bed when using NeuroSafe, and he has not had to carry out any further surgery. His positive margin rate in all surgery is 2-3% which is much lower than the national average. Generally the use of MRI scans has reduced the positive margin rate as the prostate can be seen clearly. The MRI also assists with accuracy of diagnosis and surgical treatments.

He moved onto the two main types of surgery, Anterior and Retzius. He explained that the Retzius nerve sparing technique requires a lot more training and can take a year or more to become proficient whereas the anterior approach can be taught much faster. There is a trial taking place to see if the different approaches have significant improvements in side effects notably continence and erectile function. Philip's ability to perform robotic bladder surgery means that he is confident using the machinery. The suggestion is that there is no real difference in continence and erectile function after a year. It can be surgeon specific with the most experienced surgeon getting the better results.

The improvements in prostate surgery over the last 10 years was also talked about. There are two different robots being developed now. A question was asked about artificial intelligence input. Philip suggested that is it unlikely to take over completely but it does help! There is now a move to use imaging integration with technology. It is suggested that if the technology improves and is able to show nerves and blood vessels it will be easier for surgeons to train and increase the number able to perform surgery improving outcomes.

Diagnostic options are also improving with a better understanding of MRI scans, PSMA PET CT and work on PSMA MRI scans taking place. The change to trans perineal biopsies under local anaesthetic has led to a reduction in infection rate and reduces the need for pre biopsy antibiotics. Biopsies are able to be taken with a fusion of the MRI scan onto the ultrasound machine allowing more targeting of the abnormal areas. There is a bid to get this equipment and an experienced operator has been placed for the RBH from a government fund as a result of Covid.

Philip was asked about the numbers of men being diagnosed during the pandemic. He suggests that 20-30% less men have been diagnosed over the last 18 months. It appears to be the 50 year old "well" men not going to the GP. The introduction of having an MRI first has reduced the need for biopsy by up to 50% of referrals and the risk of having a transperineal biopsy massively

reduced means that screening for prostate cancer is safer and should be encouraged. There are trials in London where men are sent straight for an MRI with PSA taken. He reminded us that over 50's should have an annual PSA and those with any family history should have one from the age of 40 yrs.

The Lions screening day and the awareness day on the 4th September were promoted.

Mr Charlesworth was thanked for his excellent presentation.

NEXT RPCSG ZOOM MEETING - 6th August 2021

The next group meeting will be held by Zoom **on Friday 6th August** that will feature a talk by Lorraine Grover, a psychosexual therapist who has a speciality in erectile dysfunction. This should be a very interesting talk.

I will send a link for this meeting to all members shortly before meeting.

RPCSG WALKS

We held an enjoyable walk in July starting in the village of Hambleden then walking along the north bank of the Thames to Henley where a refreshment stop was made at the Little Angel pub. The return was alongside the south bank of the river, crossing over the Thames at Hambleden lock. 11 people took part in this walk of almost 7 miles.

The next RPCSG walk will be on the **10th August** and will start at a free car park close to Tyle Mill bridge that is about 4 miles to the north-east of Aldermaston. The walk will be about 5 miles. Please bring our own refreshments for which there will be a stop along the way. We intend to visit the Butt Inn for further refreshments.

Directions to the car park are to leave the M4 at junction 12 and take the A4 in the direction of Theale. After about 2.1 miles turn left towards Sulhampstead - as you approach the turn you will see the Spring Inn at the junction. Continue for about one third of a mile and you will approach a swing bridge with barriers and warning lights. A few yards after the end of the bridge there is a right turn into the car park.

If you use a satnav put in the postcode RG7 4BT and if you are travelling south it will take you to a point just before the swing bridge.

The walk will start at the car park at 10:45 a.m.

COFFEE MORNINGS

In July an enjoyable coffee morning was held at the Flower Pot in Aston with 6 members participating.

The August coffee morning will be held at the Cunning Man pub on the **17th August** from 11:15 a.m. There is outside seating in the garden of the pub and views across the river Kennet.

The postcode is RG30 3RB. Directions are to travel north on Burghfield Road that runs from Burghfield to Prospect Park. The road passes over the M4 and the pub is then about 0.75 miles further on.

Some photographs during the July walk:



Henley bridge is in the background

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 6th August 2021 is an RPCSG Zoom meeting with a talk by Lorraine Grover, psychosexual therapist.

Tuesday 10th August 2021 is an RPCSG walk starting at Tyle Mill Bridge.

Tuesday 17th August 2021 is a coffee morning at the Cuning Man.