

# PHAROS

*A beacon of hope in the darkness*

*Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)*

*Issue 140: July/August 2024*

*Website: [www.rpcsg.org.uk](http://www.rpcsg.org.uk)*

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## THE JULY 2024 MEETING

The July meeting was one of the popular open meetings. These are a great opportunity to chat to other members about almost anything. We intend to hold more of these open meetings in the future.

## THE AUGUST 2024 MEETING

The August meeting featured a very interesting talk by our committee member Andrew Gabriel. The topic of his talk was 'How hormone treatment works'.

Andrew explained that prostate cancer cells thrive on the hormone testosterone that is produced by the testicles. Hormone treatment deprives the cancer cells of testosterone and so slows or stops their growth. There are two ways in which hormone treatment works – one is by stopping the body from producing testosterone, the other is by blocking testosterone from activating the cancer cells.

Andrew listed five types of hormone treatments, with examples of drugs used in each case:

- Anti-Androgens  
These block Androgen Receptors e.g. Bicalutamide, Cypoteron
- Testosterone Suppressants  
These can be either GnRH Agonists (e.g. Zoladex, Prostag, Decapeptyl)  
Or GnRH Antagonists (e.g. Degarelix, Relugolix)
- Novel Anti-Androgens  
These block Androgen Receptors more powerfully. (e.g. Enzalutamide, Darolutamide, Apalutamide)
- Novel Androgen Synthesis Inhibitors (e.g. Abiraterone)
- Estrogenic drugs  
These switch off testosterone production (e.g. Diethylstilbestrol, Estradiol)

A slide showed the process that controlled the production of testosterone, that it produced by the testicles, Testosterone is delivered to the prostate and is controlled by a process which feeds some testosterone to the hypothalamus and the pituitary gland that both feed-back to the testicles to control the production.

Anti-Androgen drugs interfere with the production process by blocking the path of testosterone into the prostate gland. Typical drugs for this purpose are Bicalutamide, Enzalutamide, Darolutamide and Apalutamide.

To conclude, Andrew described 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors, such as Finasteride, Dutasteride and some herbal supplements. Unfortunately, these are not effective against prostate cancer and are used to shrink the prostate to reduce the symptoms of BPH (Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia), also to reverse male pattern baldness.

Andrew was thanked for his very informative talk.

The live talk was recorded but there was too much background noise to use the live recording. Andrew recorded the talk again afterwards and this is available here:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVBsKi\\_pq1M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVBsKi_pq1M)

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## GROUP SOCIALS

Our Summer Social took place on 5 July at St Andrews Hall. It was very successful, being attended by over 40 Members and partners. Plenty of food was provided – especially some lovely cakes, which were beautifully prepared and provided by our very own Sue McMillan. Thank you, Sue, and also Steve Allen, who provided all the drinks, and Richard and Elizabeth Joyes, who masterminded the coffee/tea stand.

Our next Social will be our Christmas event on Friday 6 December. Our caterers are booked, and there will be the usual Christmas decorations, quiz, and Bev's and Nigel's raffle. Tickets will be priced the same as last year at £30 per person. I've already opened the attendance list, so if you want to get your name in early to avoid disappointment, you can contact me (alexbmiles@aol.com). No need to pay until November! Please remember that numbers are limited – last year we had to turn down requests for places from those who had left it too late.

I hope that you enjoy the rest of our Summer, and look forward to seeing you at our Group meetings – and, of course, at the Christmas Social.

Alex Miles  
Social Secretary.

## RPCSG WALKS AND COFFEE MORNINGS

A very pleasant walk was held in July, from the Waterside Centre to Sonning, with a refreshment stop at The Mill at Sonning.

Due to August being in the holiday season it is not intended to arrange a walk in August.

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