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*a Founder Member of the Federation of Prostate Patient Support Groups
known as 'TACKLE'*

Newsletter No. 68 - December 2018

New radiotherapy hope in the war on prostate cancer

It was reported in the Daily Mail last month that targeting the source of a prostate cancer with radiotherapy after the disease has spread can increase survival chances by 11%. Experts say the 'monumental findings' could change how advanced cancers are treated. Typically, patients whose prostate cancer has spread are given hormone therapy to reduce or stop the production of testosterone, the molecule which can encourage the cancer's growth. It is suggested that the use of high-energy radiotherapy as well is also effective. It was previously thought there would be little benefit in blasting the prostate tumour if the disease had spread to other parts of the body.

Professor Charles Swanton, Cancer Research UK's chief clinician, said *'This is a monumental finding that could help thousands of men worldwide. Adding radiotherapy to current treatment shows clear benefit for this sub-group of men with prostate cancer. If we can understand exactly why these men benefit from the additional radiotherapy treatment, hopefully we could use this approach to benefit even more patients.'*

The research suggests radiotherapy, as well as hormone therapy, should be standard care where prostate cancer has spread nearby.

Dr. Chris Parker, lead researcher of the study based at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London, said *'Our results show a powerful effect for certain men with advanced prostate cancer. These findings could and should change standards of care worldwide. The*

study proves the benefit of prostate radiotherapy for these men. Unlike new drugs for cancer, radiotherapy is a simple, relatively cheap treatment that is readily available in most parts of the world.'

These views are supported by Simon Grieveson of Prostate Cancer UK, who hopes it will lead to an immediate change in how patients are treated. He added, *'These results show for the first time that radiotherapy could also be effective in treating some men diagnosed with prostate cancer whose disease has started to spread to the lymph nodes or nearby bones when given in addition to hormone therapy. We now want to see the use of radiotherapy extended to this group of men without delay, providing them with an additional treatment option and precious extra time with their loved ones.'*

This is yet another exciting development in the treatment of prostate cancer. There are so many projects being researched currently, a lot of which are complementary and, perhaps when used together, we could at last see a reduction in deaths from this disease in the same way as the research into breast cancer has reduced deaths for ladies.



We need to wake up and stop men dying needlessly.

It was reported recently on the BBC website that **British men are dangerously ignorant of the prostate gland, and what its function is?**

But, as reported elsewhere in this newsletter, it is the leading cause of cancer in men, with 40,000 diagnosed each year. When will the significance of this statistic get through? **We, who have been diagnosed with prostate cancer, have a responsibility to spread this message.**

A recent survey by Prostate Cancer UK found that nearly one in five men did not even know they had a prostate and men in general were "blind" to the risk of cancer. Few knew it was a gland, about the size of a walnut, which sits below the bladder and in front of the rectum and that it produces the fluid that nourishes sperm. Let's be honest, how many of us, who have prostate cancer, knew these facts about our prostate, until we were told these facts after diagnosis?

The survey, of 1,900 men, found:

92% were clueless about the gland's role

54% did not know where it was

17% did not know they had a prostate

Prostate Cancer UK chief executive Angela Culhane, told the BBC News website: *"Most men are very ignorant about prostate cancer and it's dangerous because it is actually the most common cancer in men. The things it does affect - ejaculation and sexual function, urine flow and incontinence - are not regularly talked about over the dinner-table or in the pub."*

If you have been diagnosed with prostate cancer you can help your family, friends and colleagues by letting them know that nearly 11,000 men die from prostate cancer each year.; that it can have few symptoms in the early stages and because of its location most symptoms are linked to urination. Let them know that they need to be aware of these signs:-

** Needing to urinate more often, especially at night*

** Needing to run to the toilet*

** Difficulty in starting to urinate*

** Weak urine flow or taking a long time to urinate*

** Feeling your bladder has not emptied fully*

Ms. Culhane said: "A man in his 30s with none of the risk factors shouldn't be overly worried - but for men at higher risk, they should have a conversation with their GP first and then perhaps one of the specialist nurses. **If they have a family history, are black** [black men are twice as likely to develop prostate cancer as the overall population] or are over 50, then, generally, they should be thinking about having a conversation".

We all need to do our bit to spread the word

Professor Cooper's 'Tiger Test' Appeal and The Provincial Grand Lodge of Norfolk

In the last two editions of our Newsletter, you will have read my reports on the support that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Norfolk is giving to this appeal. It was launched in May this year when Prof. Cooper gave up some of his valuable time to speak at the Freemasons' annual meeting at St Andrew's Hall. The Provincial Grand Master, Right Worshipful Stephen Norman Allen, made the appeal his Charity of the Year. The aim is to raise £144,000 to enable Professor Cooper's research team to buy an Affymetrix Microarray Scanner, in the setting-up of a Screening Laboratory. The Charity of the Year will run until 29th March 2019.

I am delighted to report that at the time of writing this update, donations and commitments received so far are approaching £100,000. This is a huge effort by the 3,500 Norfolk masons, but when broken down only represents approx. £28.00 per capita. The full amount only represents £42.00 per capita which, spread over nine months of the appeal is only approx. £1 per week. With a determined mind, most things can be achieved; team work makes the dream work. Please consider giving generously to assist the **Tiger Test Appeal**. Details of how to donate direct are given in end of the following article.

Geoff Walker - Editor

A Universal Blood-Test for Cancer?

A team at Johns Hopkins University has trialed a method that detects eight common forms of the disease. Their vision is an annual test designed to catch cancer early and save lives. UK experts said it was *"enormously exciting"*. Tumours release tiny traces of their mutated DNA and proteins they make into the bloodstream. However, it is granted more work is needed to assess the test's effectiveness at detecting early-stage cancers.

The CancerSEEK test looks for mutations in 16 genes that regularly arise in cancer and eight proteins that are often released. Overall, the test found 70% of the cancers. Dr. Cristian Tomasetti, from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine said, *"This field of early detection is critical. I think this can have an enormous impact on cancer mortality. The earlier a cancer's found, the greater the chance of being able to treat it."*

The CancerSEEK test is novel because it hunts for both the mutated DNA and the proteins. Increasing the number of mutations and proteins being analysed allows it to test for a wide range of cancers. Dr. Gert Attard, team leader in the Centre for Evolution and Cancer at the Institute of Cancer Research, London, and consultant medical oncologist at the Royal Marsden NHS Foundation

Trust, told the BBC: *"This is of massive potential. I'm enormously excited. This is the Holy Grail - a blood test to diagnose cancer without all the other procedures like scans or colonoscopy. We're very close to using blood tests to screen for cancer as we have the technology"*. But he cautioned there was still uncertainty about what to do when a cancer was diagnosed. In some cases, the treatment may be worse than living with a cancer that is not immediately life-threatening. Men can already have slow growing prostate cancers closely monitored rather than treated.

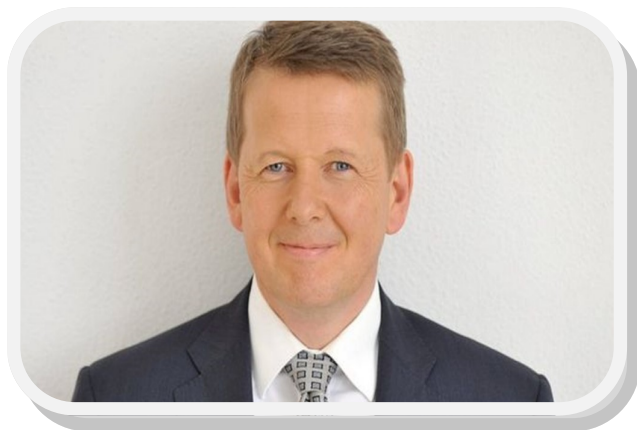
This is why Prof. Cooper's Tiger Test research, now being undertaken at the UEA, is so exciting for prostate cancers. It distinguishes between pussy cats, which can be safely monitored, and tigers, which require more urgent treatments.

Prof. Cooper and his team are tireless in their research and endeavour to raise funds for their project. This is a call to all men (and their families) to give as much financial support as we possibly can. Some will only be able to give a little whereas others could perhaps give more. And giving under Gift Aid increases a donation by 25p in the pound. Let us have trust in his project and help him to help men worldwide.

To donate to the **Tiger Test Appeal**, please contact the UEA via the details below.

giving@uea.ac.uk or 01603 592945

Former BBC Breakfast presenter Bill Turnbull has revealed he has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.



The 62-year-old said it was found in November 2017 and that cancer had spread to his legs, hips, pelvis and ribs. He told the Radio Times magazine he wanted to encourage people to get tested, saying: "Maybe if I'd got it earlier and stopped it at the prostate, I'd be in a much better state." He also said he had put long-term aches and pains down to "old age".

Turnbull, who left the BBC in 2016 and now hosts a show on Classic FM, said he had prostate tests when he was aged 40 and 50. But he said he was "cross" for having prided himself on not visiting a GP in four years and only sought help when his pains could no longer be alleviated with pills. The father of three went on to say that after being diagnosed the *"...first few days were probably the worst days of my life... The GP said, 'It's clear you have prostate cancer and that it's spread to the bone'. And all of a sudden you're in this dark chasm..."*.

Turnbull said it *"saddens me that I'm not going to be around as much as I thought with my wife and family... I realised if things progress as they do on average, I can't plan beyond 12 years. I had the disease and didn't know it."*

He has described that dealing with cancer every day is *"...relentlessly boring, You go to bed at night thinking about it, and it's still there when you wake up. It's there all day, every day, a fact of life you have to get used to..."*. He admitted he asked doctors to stop his *"...unbearable chemotherapy..."* describing each application (he had nine) as making him feel worse. He lost his sense of taste and some days could only cope by lying down to wait for the *"...crushing feeling of fatigue and nausea to pass. By round six, it felt as if the chemo was taking on a life of its own, like some malevolent goblin..."*.

It is always sorrowing to hear of someone developing prostate cancer but even more so when you hear about that someone not recognising what was happening to his own body, particularly after having had two previous PSA tests. He does not see himself as courageous for talking about his illness but is glad that doing so has raised awareness of the condition. All he wanted to do is to show men it could happen to anyone. He said *"...people have got in touch say they had gone to get checked as a result of me talking about it. It doesn't make everything worthwhile, but it certainly helps to know that someone will stay alive as a result of my experience."*



Thanks to Adrian Raeside for allowing reproduction of his cartoon

Great time was had by all at the Salvation Army's 'Last Night of the Proms'

On 19th October, at the Salvation Army Citadel, St. Giles Street, Norwich, the **Norfolk Fellowship Brass** and **The Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital Choir** entertained an enthralled audience as they presented their own version of a 'Last Night at the Proms'

The band's conductor, David Woodrow, presented to our vice-chairman, Roger Bassham, a cheque for **£1,701.72p** to aid our Support Group's work.



Norfolk Fellowship Brass with the N&NUH choir



Conductor, David Woodrow, presents our Vice chairman, Roger Bassham with the cheque

On the evening of 22nd. July our chairman, Nigel Gardiner and his wife, Judith organised a river trip from 'The Swan' at Horning, sailing along the Bure on the paddle-boat 'Southern Comfort'. 99 passengers enjoyed themselves, taking in the sights, including Ranworth and St. Benet's Abbey.

Musical entertainment was provided by The Occasional Ceilidh Band; not just only for the passengers but also some of the riverside householders and the



moored-up boats! Supper was served on the outward journey and the passengers including members and friends of our Support Group raised £600, including the proceeds from a raffle.

An excellent effort which will help our group in its work supporting prostate patients. You can view photographs, taken on the trip, on our website at -

www.prostatesupport.org.uk

Diary Dates

Open Meetings with Speaker

Monday 3rd December
Monday 4th March
(7.00pm)
Benjamin Gooch Theatre
Norfolk & Norwich Hospital

'Meet & Chat' Meetings

Monday 4th February
(7 pm)
the Big C Centre,
Norfolk & Norwich
University Hospital

Saturday 20th April
(11.45 am)
Louise Hamilton Centre
James Paget Hospital
Gorleston

Committee Meetings

Monday 7th January
(7pm)
the Big C Centre
Norfolk & Norwich Hospital

In the next edition, (March 2019), our president and founder chairman, David Haines will reflect back on the first 15 years of our Support Group, which was founded in April 2004

OUR WELFARE TEAM ARE GEORGE & JILL SIELY

live in Happisburgh and are always available to give help and support to any member, and/or their family, who requests it. They have a contact list of fellow members of our support group and are able to put you in contact with someone who has been on the same prostate cancer treatment journey as you.

Call 01692 650617 if you would like to have a chat with either of them.

How To Contact Us

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