

**Notes of Prostate Cancer Support Group Meeting
Haywards Heath & District
Held on Thursday 21 July 2016**

Peter (Chairman) welcomed new and old members to the meeting and reminded all that should anyone have any issues or queries they would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to make contact - either by speaking to Peter or a member of committee, by phone or email, as we are here to help.

Speaker: Liz Ollosson, Lead Radiographer, Preston Park Radiotherapy Centre

Liz commenced her talk by showing images of the actual tomotherapy machines used at Preston Park Radiotherapy Centre, which opened 16 May 2016, explaining the difference between those and linear accelerators. The technique was developed in the early '90s, but more commonly used from early 2000s. Plans started about 3 years ago to replace the 2 linear accelerators at the Royal County Hospital which were about 10 years old. Body area currently treated with the machines is the pelvis. They have 2 machines at Preston Park providing treatment for about 50 patients a day.

What is Tomotherapy?

It is slice by slice radiotherapy, with a 360 degree delivery to the body. Radiation is delivered constantly every 7 degrees - IMRT (Intensity Modulated Radiotherapy) with daily IGRT (Image Guided Radiotherapy). A beam of radiation is delivered from a rotating gantry while the patient travels at a constant speed through the bore. In some cases it can deliver a more conformal treatment plan and minimise toxicity to healthy tissue. The doctor will always decide which treatment is most appropriate.

Beams are delivered from all angles around the patient with incorporated daily CT scanning which enables more accurate, customised treatment. The patient's tattoos are aligned to the lasers, the CT scan is performed (approx 1 minute), any adjustments are made and treatment is delivered (1.5-5 mins). It is important that the patient is in the same position for each daily treatment. No other radiotherapy machine offers this integration of image-guided and intensity-modulated radiation therapy.

Treatments are still available at the Royal County Hospital, Brighton, dependent on the patient's treatment plan - one linear accelerator machine is still in operation there and construction work has commenced to enable another machine in Eastbourne.

Following a member's question on the success of this treatment, Liz explained that it is a difficult question to answer as it is too soon to give any clear evidence about outcome following treatment. It is certainly on a par with other available treatment but delivered more quickly and precisely. It was confirmed that the side effects of the treatment are the same as with other radiotherapy. Liz confirmed the treatment can be used for salvage, but currently, it is for primary. She explained they always treat the whole of the prostate regardless of where the cancer is within it, but she stressed the machine is able to focus on very small areas. The procedure is much quicker than other machines.

Speaker: Siobhan Meaker, Macmillan physical Activity Project Manager

Macmillan, working in partnership with Albion In The Community, the charitable arm of Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club, are promoting an initiative to ensure physical activity can be made available to people living with and beyond cancer across Sussex.

Siobhan, who has experienced cancer herself and benefited from exercise when coping with cancer, explained that she works with a variety of people with ill health, the homeless, disabled and also children, helping them access activities.

Last August a “Brighter Outlook” was launched providing 1-2-1 support from specially trained cancer and rehabilitation coaches to people who want to access free exercise classes or gym in the Brighton and Hove area. Macmillan funding is enabling this work to be extended and developed into West and East Sussex to May 2018.

Research has shown that staying active is safe and beneficial in most cases of cancer. The benefits can include less fatigue and improved mood, reduced disease progression and a decrease in risk of recurrence. Being active to recommended levels can also help reduce the risk of other health conditions such as coronary heart disease and diabetes. In most cases, no GP approval is necessary. Examples of Moderate exercise are walking, bowls, gym, table tennis, badminton, cycling.

Why is it so good?

- gives you a sense of control
- reduces consequence of treatment
- helps with fatigue
- boosts mood
- boosts muscular strength
- helps bone health
- boosts flexibility
- reduces the risk of lymphedema (swelling)
- helps to maintain healthy weight (with healthy diet)
- Reduces risk factors for lots of long term conditions, including coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression.
- reduces risk of recurrence of some types of cancer incl. bowel and prostate cancer.

There are no formal activity guidelines, but it is recommended that people should avoid being sedentary, preferably start by exercising 10 minutes daily, trying to build up muscle strength on at least 2 days a week, and include some balance exercises.

The recommendation is 150 minutes a week of moderate activity, the aim being not to exacerbate symptoms. If white blood cell count is low, then light to moderate exercise only is recommended. Avoid all high impact and strenuous repetitive exercise.

It has been shown that regular physical activity during and after cancer treatment not only improves the function and wellbeing of the body, but significantly improves survival rates.

‘Move More Sussex’ supported by Macmillan, provides 1-2-1 motivational interviewing and physical activity support from experienced and friendly cancer exercise rehabilitation coaches.

For those who are interested a Circuits Group Scheme is held every Tuesday morning 10.30-11.30 at Rawson Hall, Bolney, £1 a session for 12 sessions, the aim being to get people undergoing cancer treatment back to exercise. This initiative meets NICE guidance.

For those in wheelchairs, exercise can be chair-based, to maintain upper body strength. This is provided in the Horizon Centre, Brighton, near A & E Dept at Royal County Hospital on Thursday mornings; also on the seafront. Coaching/classes are also offered at the Triangle, B.Hill and Dolphin, H.Heath. Aqua classes can also be offered. Coaches maintain contact to ensure goals are achieved. Members showing interest were encouraged to make contact and complete questionnaires which were made available.

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Chairman’s Summary

After thanking Liz and Siobhan for their very interesting, informative (and entertaining) talks, Peter suggested that members may find “Insights” magazine useful and certainly very interesting. It was

also reported that £37 was collected at our last support group meeting for St Peter and St James' Hospice. Very, very many thanks to all who donated.

Peter thanked the members of the committee for their time commitment and hard work in attending and arranging meetings and speakers, and advised that Mike Streeter has now very kindly agreed to join the committee.

Finally, Peter advised that, in conjunction with PCaSO Brighton, we are holding a support group and prostate cancer awareness day at The Martlets, Burgess Hill on 8 October at which men will be afforded the opportunity to talk about any prostate concerns and have a PSA test. If members know anyone who could be interested in this opportunity, then please do advise them. The event will be publicised nearer the time.

Next Support Group Meeting

Thursday 17 November 2016, Dolphin Surgery Meeting Room, when our speaker will be Philip Savage, Consultant Oncologist from the Princess Royal .

J Lea
24.7.16