

# U.G.I.

## Upper G.I. Blues

Raising Awareness of & Funding Research Into  
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers

# Newsletter

# September

# 2017

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Raising Awareness of & Funding Research into  
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers.

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## Dr. Taren Gupta at Walsall Meeting.

A well attended meeting at Manor Hospital was pleased to welcome Senior UGI Registrar Dr. Taren Gupta to our meeting on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August.

Dr. Gupta joined us to give a very informative and at times humorous presentation on nutrition, concentrating on the variety of vitamins necessary for our good health and how our diets have changed over the ages.

Speaking about the early ages of man, twenty thousand years ago being a hunter gatherer for his food. The development of farming which led to early settlements and a more varied diet through to the introduction of sugar to our diet to the present day where there is less hunter gathering, more phoning for a take away or taking a visit to MacDonalds.

Even speaking about the evolution of our planet, bringing up the fact that the only self sufficient living things on Earth are plants that survive and flourish on sunlight and water. People need a variety of foods, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and amino acids in their diet to survive.

Dr. Gupta spoke about the various vitamins our bodies need and mentioned some of the diseases and conditions that can occur if they are missing from our diet.

Starting with vitamin C as being one of the first as being essential to our diet. Over six hundred years ago it was discovered that sailors who spent months away at sea often suffered from scurvy. It was found that if fruits high in vitamin C were included in the diet the cases of scurvy were much lower. They may not have known at the time why it worked but they knew that it did, so much so that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lime juice, high in vitamin C was issued to all Royal Navy sailors while they were at sea.

Moving on to the B vitamins and the effect of lack of Vitamin B1 which can lead to tiredness, weakness and muscle wasting.

Vitamin B1 is found in brown rice which is much better for you than polished white rice, though not quite so tasty. B1 also known as thiamine is found in the bran coat of grains and in meat, it is also commonly added to breakfast cereals.

B3 niacin essential for growth found in milk, yeast and liver and is also regularly added to breakfast cereals.

And then on to our perennial nightmare Vitamin B12, essential in digestion and production of red blood cells, used to treat pernicious anaemia . It was noted again by many of our patients that GPs seem to be very reluctant to prescribe Vitamin B12 injections though it is recommended that patients who have undergone gastric surgery should have this injection at least once every three months. It could be that GPs are misreading blood test results or that the tests are carried out when patient levels are at a peak, but all of the B vitamins are water soluble and are flushed out of the body, so you cannot overdose.

Now onto the fat soluble vitamins which are stored in the body so it is possible to overdose, though this is rare. These include Vitamin A found in fish liver oils and in dark green leafy vegetables such as kale. Essential for natural cell growth. Lack of vitamin A can lead to hardening and roughening of the skin, night blindness and degeneration of mucus membranes. Vitamin D found in milk, fish and eggs, and most essentially in sunlight. There are differences of opinion in how much Vitamin D we should obtain from sunlight but Kate, who has a vitamin D deficiency has been told that this is the best source. It is recommended that light or fair skinned people should spend no longer than fifteen minutes at a time exposed to direct sunlight without the use of sunscreen. Lack of vitamin D can lead to tiredness, weak bones and muscle weakness.

We also need trace elements in our diet such as zinc, which can have a low blood count in children and in alcoholics, though why Dr. Gupta referred to alcoholics is beyond me.

He also mentioned that a low copper count was sometimes noted though this was rare.

In all a very interesting presentation and we would welcome Dr. Gupta back at any time.

## Alf Baker Sends His Thanks to Paul Wells.

Here we go again "B12". In response to Paul Wells article in recent newsletter, may I first say a big thank you to Paul, he is about the first person who it seems to actually understand the needs, that people like him myself and I am sure that there are many many more patients out there who have or are having the problem of convincing people and some GPs that people who have had total or partial Gastrectomy need B12 injections.

Myself I only had partial removal (90%) but I was informed by Mr Whitting who did my operation I would need to have B12 injections every 12 weeks for the rest of my life. I had my operation 10 years ago and for the last 9 years have received regular injections and felt great. But then for some reason but only known to my GP, he refused to give me B12, his only explanation for this was

"If you die" and I have to attend your inquest it would be me that was at fault for giving you B12 when your blood test readings show normal (normal readings are between 246-700mg/l).

A couple of weeks later I had course to attend my local surgery my own GP wasn't available so I saw his locum, the doctor did more blood tests, the results that came back and he informed me that I had Pernicious Anaemia

and that my B12 levels and Ferritin levels were very low, he immediately gave me a B12 injection and another the next day also putting me on a course of Ferrons Sul-phate tablets to get me back to normal.

When I next saw my regular GP he again refused to give me B12. It was now I realized I had to change my GP, on doing this my new GP was a very nice young Asian lady who very patiently listened to all my moans and complaints with regards to B12. She then apologized profusely and said she that she did not know enough about us patients with this need but she said she would refer me to the surgeries senior doctor which she did. I saw this GP the following week along with the practice Nurse.

She immediately said I would be given a course of 6 injections over a period of 2 weeks and every 12 weeks thereafter.

I am very sorry if this sounds a little long winded but I had to get this off my chest I now feel a million times better and full of energy.

What I am trying to do is emphasize it pays to keep onto our GPs don't always accept what they say.

PS, My new GPs only explanation for my old GPs actions were that he is probably "Old School"

## Dr. Nigel Trudgill & wife Jenny Compete in The Velo.

Dr. Nigel Trudgill, gastro Consultant at Sandwell Hospital and his wife Jenny are to take part in The Velo, a one hundred mile cycle ride around Birmingham and the West Midlands on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> September to help raise funds for Upper G.I. Blues.

Around 15,000 cyclists will take part in the ride, starting in waves from 7am to 9am. The starting point in Broad Street takes our cyclists through closed roads up to the Hagley Road and down through Halesowen and Stourbridge. They then make their way through the Staffordshire villages of Swindon and Wombourne. They journey through Bobbington and Enville on to Kinver. They continue through Bobbington and Wolverley, try The Queens Head on the green for a drink, before they take a pit stop at The Mercure Hotel.

Then to Bewdley and along the side of the river Severn and onto Droitwich Spa and up to the village of Clent in the Clent Hills where there is another pit stop at The Vine Inn. Here they take on refreshments before tackling the toughest part of the ride, the one and a half mile climb of St. Kenelms Pass, with its incline of one in ten in places. Then down into Romsley before they start to climb again along the Hagley Road and back into Broad Street for an exhausted finish.

I hope some of you will find the time to visit some of the route to cheer them on. I'm sorry we can't be with you but we will be relaxing in Cadiz.

You can sponsor Nigel and Jenny on this ride, just send any donations to Upper G.I Blues, or see us at our Thursday morning stall at Sandwell Hospital.

## Our Macmillan Coffee Morning.

We are holding our annual Macmillan Coffee morning on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September in Outpatients reception at Sandwell hospital.

Join us for a cup of tea or a coffee and a cake. We will have a selection of home made and hand decorated cakes on sale along with a special cake that we will be raffling off. This cake will be made by that well known baker, Lynne from domestics. You can get a drink and a cake from just £1.

Donations of home made cakes would be most welcome, but most of all come along and join Lynne, Heather and Barry as they raise funds for our friends at Macmillan Cancer Support.

## The Christmas Party.

Included in this months newsletter is your invitation to our Christmas Party. We have had a change of venue to The Holiday Inn, M6 junction 7. This gives easy access to everyone from all parts of our area. If you travel down the M6 motorway to junction 7 take the exit towards Walsall and the hotel is about half a mile on your right. Turn right into Chapel Lane. The same applies if you travel from The Scott Arms junction at Great Barr, if you come from Walsall direction along the Birmingham Road take the left at the traffic lights just past the Harvester.

## The Next Meetings.

Queen Elizabeth UGI support group have a meeting on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> of September in the lecture rooms at the main hospital. Meet in the main entrance foyer for directions to the room. This will be a general get together for all patients and carers, with UGI registrar Depak there to answer any questions that arise from your conversations.

Les also wants me to let you know there is a Christmas get together on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December at Hills Court Hotel, Rose Hill, Rednal. B45 8RS. The event costs £13 per person with a buffet arranged to suit our diets.

The Next Upper G.I. Blues meeting is on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October at 2pm in Room 11 Manor Hospital conference suite. Guest speaker to be confirmed.