

U.G.I.

Upper G.I. Blues

Raising Awareness of & Funding Research Into
Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers

Newsletter

February

2018

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Upper Gastrointestinal Cancers.

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Dr. Fackrell's Perfectly Pitched Presentation.

It was so good to see so many people, friends old and new at our first meeting in the newly refurbished Education Centre at Sandwell Hospital, and what a great guest speaker for our meeting.

We had invited Dr. David Fackrell, consultant oncologist from Queen Elizabeth Hospital to to speak to us about chemotherapy and radio therapy in the treatment of UGI cancers, but David did much more than this.

He started by introducing himself, told us of his medical training and how he was part of a team at Q.E and how his main role was looking after our particular group of patients from Sandwell and Walsall. He went on to tell us about his family, how he had met and married a girl from Dudley and how this had brought him to the West Midlands to work. He spoke about his two children, and about his own family, and of his passion for sports. Of his support for Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and his visits to cricket and golf tournaments with his brother. Well before he started to tell us anything about the clinical side of his work he had everyone feeling that this was a doctor that you could speak to plainly, who would listen to what you had to say and would look after you to the very best of his ability.

When he did speak about the treatments he could offer he explained things in simple details that everyone could understand. We got to know not only how but why different treatments using chemo or radio therapy were decided upon. Of the advances in the use of immunotherapy were perhaps the future for non operable UGI cancers and how this could be used for the better targeted treatment than the one case treats all use of chemo therapy.

A really memorable presentation from such a likeable man.

February is Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month.

Lets do all we can to help raise awareness of this condition so that we can get people diagnosed earlier. We know that if discovered early enough there is a very good chance of a cure. I believe that one of the major problems we have is the advertising from companies like Gaviscon and Nexium that advise that these are common symptoms that their products can easily relieve when they could be disguising more serious problems. I think it is time to lobby these companies and the government to insist that they include a warning on their packaging that if symptoms persist the patient needs to consult their GP for further hospital tests.

We need to keep letting people know of the warning signs of UGI cancers and advise that they should see their GP if they are over 50 or have a family history of UGI cancers and suffer from any of the following symptoms.

Increased difficulty in swallowing

Persistent pains at the top of the stomach

Persistent heartburn or acid reflux lasting more than three weeks

Persistent vomiting or you regurgitate food & drink

Unexpected or unexplained weight loss

The need to take indigestion remedies on a regular basis.

We can all help spread this information and if we could get this displayed in GP surgeries it would help even more.

Pre-printed and laminated notices giving these details are available from Upper G.I. Blues on request.

Letters & Tips.

I have found an item that has helped me to get a better nights sleep and thought I would pass this on to you all. Last week we were in Lidl and Kate saw this tube pillow and asked if I would like to try one out.



It's just a tube but you can shape it to suit yourself. It's filled with polystyrene beads which mould to your body so that it stays in place and gives firm support. I have found it great and a bargain at just £12.

One other thing, I'm back on the tube feed, and although the new machine is much more portable than the one I had for years I still have the problem with frequent weeing when on over-night feeds. If any of you gentlemen have the same problem heres a tip I was given by my nutrician nurse. To save having to keep going to the toilet, keep a 2 litre wide neck fabric conditioner bottle by the bed and use it as a sealable overnight wee bottle.

The Next Meetings.

The next Upper G.I. Blues meeting is on Monday 26th February at 2pm at Walsall Manor Hospital. Our invited guest speaker is Senior Gastroenterologist Dr. Mark Cox. Following his last meeting with the group I would say that this is one not to be missed.

Queen Elizabeth UGI support group meeting is on Thursday 8th March, here is a short message from Les Woodhall.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 8th March at 2pm in Education Centre Room 1. This new room will be far more suitable for us, much closer to get to and ideal for serving refreshments. Our thanks go to Gloria Tilt, one of our CNS's for obtaining this super room.

At our next meeting we will have a presentation given by Alex Hollis who was one of two final year medical students who spent eight weeks last summer working on a research project under the guidance of Mr Ewen Griffiths, one of our UGI consultants. Alex is now Dr. Alex Hollis.

Les.

Sandwell's next meeting is on Friday 23rd March where our invited speaker is Dr. Philip Harvey, Gastroenterology Research Fellow working with Dr. Nigel Trudgill.

At all of these meetings after the guest speaker there is always time for you to bring up any questions or concerns you may have and these will be answered by our members who have probably gone through a simmilar experience. If you would like a private chat just speak the chair of the meeting and they will arrange this for you.