



# **Patient and Carers' Newsletter**

## **Summer 2016**



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# South Wales Cancer Network Conference



The South Wales Cancer Network 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Patient Conference has been organised for:

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012**  
**10.00am to 15.00pm**  
**The Orangery, Margam Park**

The Patient Organising Committee has developed an exciting agenda which includes a series of presentations in the morning session; and following lunch round table discussions on topics supporting 'Meeting Peoples' Needs' focusing on:-

- The role of the Key Worker
- Holistic Needs Assessment
- Care Planning
- Communication



Ovarian cancer is the UK's deadliest gynaecological disease, with more than 7,000 new cases diagnosed each year. It takes the life of a woman every two hours. Sadly, the survival rate is lower in Wales than the rest of the UK.

Ovarian Cancer Action is working hard to raise awareness of Ovarian Cancer in Wales. The charity is looking to recruit a number of Voices - volunteers who have experienced the impact of ovarian cancer - to tell their stories and help make some noise about the disease.

Ovarian cancer is an often misunderstood and there are a lot of myths and misconceptions surrounding the disease. Some 80% of women cannot name the symptoms of ovarian cancer and many women mistakenly believe that ovarian cancer has no symptoms at all. Another common misconception is that a cervical smear test will detect ovarian cancer, but this is simply not true.

One of the main problems with ovarian cancer is that it is too often diagnosed at a late stage, when treatment is less effective. But, when caught early, prognosis is often much better.

This is why awareness of symptoms is so important.

Symptoms to watch out for are:

- Persistent stomach pain
- Persistent bloating
- Finding it difficult to eat or feeling full quickly
- Needing to wee more often

Other symptoms you may notice include:

- Back pain
- Changes in your bowel habits (diarrhoea or constipation)
- Feeling tired all the time

If you're experiencing these symptoms regularly (on most days), or you have any concerns, it is important to talk to your GP as soon as possible. To learn more about the symptoms of ovarian cancer please visit [www.ovarian.org.uk](http://www.ovarian.org.uk).

Because the symptoms of ovarian cancer can often be mistaken for other illnesses, it can be helpful to keep a symptoms diary to take to your GP. This will help them rule out ovarian cancer. Ovarian Cancer Action has a symptoms diary to help you with this. Either download the app version (search for 'Ovarian Cancer Action' in the app store of your phone) or use the paper version available on the charity's website.

Ovarian Cancer Action strives to make ovarian cancer treatment more effective, and to reduce the number of women who die from the disease.

If you are interested in an awareness talk or becoming an Ovarian Cancer Action Voice then please contact Alicia Roberts (Wales Regional Officer) on 07761511927 or [alicia@ovarian.org.uk](mailto:alicia@ovarian.org.uk)

If you can help spread awareness of the disease by displaying information leaflets or posters please contact Alicia or request them on the Ovarian Cancer Action website at <http://ovarian.org.uk/what-we-want/raising-awareness-of-ovarian-cancer/order-awareness-materials>



# Tips to Deal with Hearing Bad News

When the doctor tells you that you have cancer, it is pretty normal to feel afraid. You may also feel like crying, or perhaps angry. These feelings are normal.

Only you can say how you react to the diagnosis. There cannot be a right way. You are an individual, with your own life and responsibilities. Only you know how you feel. It is quite likely that you won't remember much of the rest of the discussion. The doctor or nurse will be talking, you might be replying, but the shock of a diagnosis can mean that you don't take much in.

You may leave clutching an appointment card, and a fistful of leaflets, with no idea what your diagnosis means. You might be able to answer your loved ones' questions but often people can't remember what was said.

You can always ask again what your diagnosis means. You can go and see your GP, or practice nurse. Somewhere in the information you have been given is the name of your cancer nurse. If you can't find the name of your cancer nurse simply telephone the clinic and ask who is assigned to you. But DO talk to them.

Write down the names and numbers you need in your diary or a new note book. Doctors are OK with you writing things down when you see them. It helps everyone. Some people find taking notes of unfamiliar words, and their meaning, helpful.

Any medical professional will understand that just the word 'cancer' can be overloading and make you unable to understand what else is said. If you need to ask many times, then ask. It is normal.

The feeling of being lost and helpless will not go away quickly. And some people, even close family, might make unhelpful remarks. You may not 'bounce back' from this big shock soon.

Importantly, give yourself time.

**Jane Barnard**

**Patient**

# **Wales in the World**

## **Celebrating 1000 Bone Marrow Donation**



**Welsh Blood Service**  
**Gwasanaeth Gwaed Cymru**

On Thursday 16th June, the Welsh Blood Service celebrated its 1,000th collection of a matched donor from their Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry with donors who have saved the lives of patients across the world.

The Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry has exported stem cells and bone marrow to 34 countries worldwide. This means 1,000 donations were collected in Wales and provided to patients throughout the world!

Donors who have helped patients in each country were invited to a celebration at the Senedd, with talks from guest speakers including Malcolm Thomas, who set up the British Bone Marrow Donor Appeal, and patient Deborah Wortelhock, who shared her experience of having a bone marrow transplant that saved her life.

Cath O'Brien, Director of Welsh Blood Service added:

“This is an amazing achievement for everyone involved with the Welsh registry and we are truly inspired and proud of our 1,000 donors whose generous donations have helped so many patients in Wales and all over the world.”

For many patients, transplant is the only option and their life hangs in the balance when searching for a donor. This is why there is an ongoing need for more potential bone marrow and stem cell donors to join the Welsh registry to give greater hope to patients who are desperately searching for that one person who could potentially give them a second chance at life.

With this in mind, the Welsh registry will continue to strive to do even more to save the lives of patients in need of a stem cell or bone marrow transplant. The mission and quest of worldwide registries is to find a donor for anyone who needs one.

**The Welsh Bone Marrow Donor Registry is always in need of more bone marrow donors to come forward and join the register. To join, visit [www.welshblood.org.uk](http://www.welshblood.org.uk) for more information or ask at your next blood donation session.**

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



# Lung Cancer Awareness

## July 2016

### Let's be clear about lung cancer

Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in Wales. There are around 2,400 new cases in Wales every year. It kills more men and women than any other form of cancer.

Lung cancer can affect people of all ages; however, it starts to get more common after the age of 50. Although it is more common in smokers around one in eight people with lung cancer never smoked.

Finding lung cancer early improves the chances of successful treatment.

So if you have a cough for three weeks or more, it's worth contacting your GP to be on the safe side.

### Let's be clear about how to spot it

You need to tell a doctor straight away if you have been coughing for the past three weeks or more. Some of the other symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A cough that has got worse or changes
- Repeated chest infections
- Coughing up blood
- Breathlessness
- Feeling more tired than usual for some time
- Losing weight for no obvious reason
- An ache or pain in your chest or shoulder that has lasted some time.

If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your doctor right away.

This newsletter has been produced by the South Wales Cancer Network. If you wish to place an article in the next issue, please contact Eleri Girt via e-mail:

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