

Notes on Prostate Cancer Support Group Meeting held at the Dolphin Surgery, Haywards Heath on 19th March 2015

Peter Barton (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the arrangements for the afternoon. He asked if there were any members who would be interested in joining the group committee and explained briefly what that would entail.

He introduced Diane Ruban from Healthwatch West Sussex and Dr Fiona McKinna, Lead Consultant at the Sussex Cancer Centre, Brighton.

Healthwatch West Sussex

Healthwatch West Sussex are the local branch of the independent and statutory consumer watchdog for health and social care services. They work with all of the providers in West Sussex and represent all West Sussex residents. The stories and experiences collected by Healthwatch are shared with the providers so they can improve services. They also have an Independent Complaints Advocacy Service if the issues are particularly serious and work closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau. They are completely independent and patients remain anonymous.

Diane responded to questions from Group members and issued leaflets for members to take away with them.

Peter asked that a link be provided to the Healthwatch West Sussex website from the Group's website.

Dr Fiona McKinna

Dr McKinna started by apologising for arriving too late to give a talk at the November meeting. She explained her current role as Lead Consultant at the Sussex Cancer Centre in Brighton and a doctor for Prostate Cancer. One in two of us will get cancer and The Centre aims to provide really good cancer care and to improve services for patients.

Dr McKinna then spoke about **Brachytherapy** treatment where radiotherapy is delivered directly into the prostate which enables a higher dose to be administered to the organ without affecting surrounding tissue. She explained that there are two types of treatment:

1. Permanent Implant of seeds delivering low dose radiation under general anaesthetic. The survival rate is similar to that found with surgery but with fewer side effects.
2. Temporary Implant using a radioactive source which delivers a high dose of radiation in short bursts. Dr McKinna described the machine as similar to "dusty bin".

There is a new Brachytherapy suite at Brighton and this will be used for prostate treatment and also for gynaecological and other cancers. The treatment is quick but thorough planning is needed. She stressed that Brachytherapy is not suitable for everyone – the minimum requirement would be those who have had early diagnosis, a PSA of under 15 and no sign of spread. Most men have radiotherapy which has moved on and improved, reducing side effects.

In response to a question about the CyberKnife and whether this would be available in Sussex, Dr McKinna explained that as yet none are available but there is a possibility of one soon. She explained that there is also a new radiotherapy machine which will reduce

the treatment time from 7.5 weeks to 5 days. There are at least 9 treatments that can be used after radiotherapy, surgery, brachytherapy etc.

There is a DaVinci robotic machine in Eastbourne, purchased by the League of Friends, which is up and running. Brighton will have a new building in 10 years time and in the interim there will be more machines in Brighton, but not at the Royal Sussex. All these changes are subject to financial constraints but we have turned a corner.

Dr McKinna was asked her view on **Immunotherapy**. She said that massive steps forward have been made in this treatment which uses your own immune response – targeting in a different way. There are some side effects with the treatment on prostate cancer, but not too many so far.

General queries on hormone treatments after radiotherapy were raised by members. Dr McKinna responded with information on the various treatments and informed the members of the side effects attributable to each. Dr McKinna also talked about the Stampede and other Trials.

Drawing the meeting to a close, the Chairman said it was a huge privilege for the Group to have Dr McKinna speak to us so informatively and thanked her for answering so many questions in a way that members were able to understand.

The **next meeting** will be held on **Thursday 23rd July** at the Dolphin Surgery, when Mr Simon Woodhams, a Consultant Urologist, will be speaking to the Group. Please note that this meeting will start at 5pm and finish at 7pm.