

Tor**bay**
PROSTATE
SUPPORT
Association

TPSA is registered with the Charity Commissioners as Number 1095734

Serving men of all ages, and their partners, through a program of support before, during and after diagnosis

Newsletter Winter 2010 Issue No. 22

Chairman's Report

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all and your families and friends, lets hope the weather will improve quickly as we run into Spring and Summer.

I am pleased to report that our members meeting in January was very successful. Dr Mehta's talk was extremely well received as usual and brought many interesting and intriguing questions. We are very grateful to him for giving his time and his continuing support to us. It was pleasing to welcome a spattering of new faces but it would help and encourage us if more existing members came along.

We had a most enjoyable Christmas Lunch again this year at the Dainton Golf Club with 30 members coming along. There are also monthly lunches which Sylvia Bevis(01803 782218) is organising. Please contact her direct for specific details.

David (our Newsletter Editor) and I attended a Federation Meeting in Bristol and were very pleased with the strides it has made and the work they are doing bringing Groups like ours together as well as making influential support in the Medical field, all of course in support of Prostate Cancer. I will hope to more fully explain their activities at our next meeting.

There is an interesting article inside the covers written from a Partners point of view which is most enlightening. Very few people consider that the Partner has her own worries and stressful occasions but usually manages to hide problems from HER Partner.

Any members who would wish to assist the Chestnut Appeal at the Devon County Show by offering their presence would be welcome. The dates are 20/21/22 May (Thurs-Friday-Saturday). Please contact me and I will pass your name forward with you telephone number. We are all working for the same cause and it could be a free ticket to boot.

Please let David or I know if you have any constructive comments regarding the Website.

Sincerely Best Wishes to You All
Peter Hosking
February 2010

There will be a Coffee Morning at Preston again this year.

Dennis Brint (01803 391042) works hard to raise funds and succeeds.

With your help, and attendance, it could be an even bigger success.
Please bring every one along and a raffle prize. It will be most enjoyable.

Prostate Partners!

'Who takes care of the carer while the carer's busy taking care?'

One carer's frank and open perspective.

'I'm not a medical professional or a nurse or a saint - I just care.'

It is often the partner of a man encountering prostate problems who encourages him to seek medical investigation. Disturbed sleep and urinary symptoms can be the first signs that 'something is wrong',

Fear and panic can flood in when you hear -the words: '*It's Cancer.*' Fear of having to nurse, fear of death, fear of the changes you'll have to make. Anger, because this is not what you signed up for. Anger at the prospect of financial changes due to time off work, medication and treatment. Then **guilt** because you realise it's not what he wanted either. All of these reactions are normal. The mood swings, uncertainty, anger and the 'why me' syndrome that can happen during the period of diagnosis will often disrupt the calm and normal running of the domestic scene. Few people realise that the partner is experiencing similar emotional symptoms to the man, whilst trying to keep an optimistic outlook and adopt a supportive role.

Things you might do:

Offer your support, go with him to his appointments if he wants. If he prefers to go alone, be there with him, mentally and spiritually..

If you go to the consultations, be the **note taker** and the **listening** ears.

Write down the *medi* speak, so that you can look it up later. The person being diagnosed has his own agenda and may not want to hear the details or the stark truth.

You can: -

Ask questions, and if the answer's not clear, **ask again**.

Ask pointed questions,

Ask embarrassing questions

If you and your partner are not comfortable with the treatment plan or the doctor, encourage your partner to ask the GP about a second opinion.

Discuss with the doctor and your partner all the ramifications of treatments offered. If you, as carer, have worries about certain aspects resulting from treatment such as 'will we ever make love again?', 'will he be incontinent?' **Ask; insist**, never take a brush off, because **you** are going to be the mainstay over the next weeks, months and years!

If he goes to the doctor alone, **listen** attentively on his return. You may **need to** go with him to a future appointment to get things sorted and clear.

Read as much as you can about his and your particular problems, search the internet.

Remember: there is a wealth of formal and informal help that's on hand locally, usually at the end of the telephone line or at your local support group.

Treatment

The waiting time can become unbearable unless you busy yourself and get him involved in 'stuff.'

Things you might try to help your partner

Think about changing the general diet or methods of cooking and eating. Include food or drinks that the experts say could help - pure pomegranate juice, pure tomato juice, tomatoes cooked in olive oil etc.

Let him experiment with complementary remedies **that do not intrude** on regular treatments, for example, relaxation or aroma therapy, massage, yoga, meditation. These things are a positive move that often result in a *feel good* factor, even if they are not cures. **Always** check it out with the doctor first.

Encourage him to embark on exercises or routines that can be followed to strengthen muscles, mood and spirits.

(Continued inside Back cover)

Things you might try for yourself

Keep your sense of humour as much as you can *or as much as you dare to!* **Men's ailments are always so much worse than women's!!** Fear of not being able to achieve and maintain an erection will often make your man feel less of one, and his defences will not even allow him to cuddle, stroke or hold you, This can be very hurtful but you've got two arms, two lips and a sex drive, so read the magazines and try some of the moves! The worst that can happen is that he'll tell you to get lost.

That's not unusual in any long term partnership so try again tomorrow - or next week!

Try to let people help if they offer. Perhaps let them drive you to or from the hospital, or the hair-dressers, the shops or to have coffee and a chat with friends. Talk about mundane matters to ease the continual stress of *coping- or not coping*. Continue with as much of your social life as possible. Depression can become a problem. Two depressed partners can cause untold misery. Get help if or when you think you need it.

You must ensure that you both get some good quality rest and sleep, but it is not the best time in the scene for you to suggest separate beds OR to get cranky if he says he would appreciate sleeping alone. You have feet and can always walk to the next bedroom for that very important goodnight or good morning cuddle, canoodle or aroma therapy massage!! *Yes! Him to give you the treatment!* Some medication may assist any extended lack of sleep.

Remember to look after yourself as well. You still have your own needs

Things you might try together

A man with 'problems with his plumbing' can still take the rubbish out, can still cut the grass or clean the windows and has not usually gone soft in the head. You can do a cross-word or two, take short walks together, have a visit to the movies, go on a shopping trip, or have supper with family and friends. All these may well be a distraction - an outlet for a chat and may restore a few hours **normality** which is, at times, hard to achieve.

Give family, relations, workmates and friends some updates and information about your situations so that they can understand any changes in his or your routines, attitudes or behaviour.

Now is a good time to ensure that your mate relatives and friends check their prostate health to avoid being in your partner's situa-tion at a later date.

Slow Recovery or Setback

Truthful optimism, positive thought, meditation, prayer, any form of exercise, and the support of family and friends are all useful tools to rally flagging spirits. When all else fails to help, go to the beach, the garden or the park, scream loud and long, have a really good weep, and go back to start with your head held high. Hope is positive and help is available for carers.

HELP!!!!

We, the Trustees, are now urgently requiring assistance with our ongoing work and responsibilities. With four Trustees working extremely hard, we are somewhat overburdened virtually on a daily basis. Some of us are not blessed with good health but in spite of these handicaps we do get some very good results, providing the programmes and events as well as the considerable administration work that it all inevitably creates.

We are not necessarily looking at replacement Trustees but individuals who are prepared to help out as required; perhaps attend a meeting once every six weeks or so -- and be there when needed.

Our Newsletter Editor has done an excellent job since taking over in the last twenty four months, but it is possible that he will be emigrating (he will be missed very much) and he will need to be replaced within the foreseeable future. Anyone out there, especially with computer and desktop publishing skills would be most welcome in this context.

General factotums or people who are prepared to turn their hand to anything and everything as required would be made very welcome as well as someone who is prepared to help or do some secretarial work.

Volunteers please contact our Chairman Peter Hosking 01803 842886, he is waiting to hear from you.

GIFT AID

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Using Gift Aid will make the donation worth more. For every £1 you give, we will get an extra 28 pence from the Inland Revenue. Simply complete the form and send it with your donation payable to TPSA.

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Thank you for your support

TRUSTEES

Peter Hosking	Chairman/ Treasurer	01803 842886
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Sylvia Bevis		01803 782218
George Husband		01626 361741
Ray Matthews		01803 606915
David Wakefield		01626 201326

Can I fill this empty space with your name?

We STILL urgently need help to run the Association

“Look after the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves”- but not unless we have a Treasurer! Could you spare just
2-3 hours per month
to take on this very important role?

We are always looking for willing helpers.

Anyone who wishes to volunteer should contact one of the above

Disclaimer: The information and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not an endorsement or recommendation by the TPSA or the Editor for any medical treatment, product, service or course of action.

For medical, legal or other advice, please consult appropriate professionals of your choice.

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