



Speakers' Corner - Cancer awareness at The Royal Marsden

This month's Speakers' Corner comes from The Royal Marsden, the world renowned hospital that specialises in cancer care, treatment, research, training and education.

This month is Gynaecological Cancer Awareness month. At The Royal Marsden we are working to highlight the risks for women and giving advice on early diagnosis to GPs to improve clinical outcomes.

To do this, we run a GP education programme which includes events and a newsletter curated and edited by our consultants, and most recently these have focused on women's cancers.

We take a symptom led approach in our GP materials, focusing on red flag symptoms to ensure they mirror GPs' day-to-day practice. In particular, we want to highlight ovarian cancer which has a poor prognosis; less than 40% of patients survive five years due to the late onset of presenting symptoms which are often confused with bowel related disorders, including:

pain in the lower abdomen/side

feeling bloated/full feeling in the abdomen

Testing for the CA 125 protein is the key to diagnosing suspected ovarian cancer, and NICE recommend this if a woman, especially if she is 50 or over, presents with the above symptoms, or:

pelvic or abdominal pain

increased urinary urgency and/or frequency

unexplained weight loss, fatigue or changes in bowel habit

symptoms within the last 12 months that suggest irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), because IBS rarely presents for the first time in women of this age.

However, around 20% of ovarian cancers do not have an elevated CA-125 therefore if serum CA125 is 35 IU/ml or greater, an ultrasound scan of the abdomen and pelvis should be performed.

For more information, subscribe to receive the women's cancers issue of our GP Oncology Update newsletter [here](#).

Our GP Education Series

In 2009, we established our GP Education Series; a programme of free learning tools for GPs to provide advice on early diagnosis, managing patients post treatment and key information regarding the complications of cancer - providing clear guidance on when to make a referral.

Our aim is to work closely with GPs to identify their problem areas so that we can focus our education accordingly. We base our topics on feedback from GPs and by the volume of referrals we receive to clinical units where they do not equate to an increase in diagnosis - indicating where we need to provide further guidance.

We work in partnership with Cancer Research UK to equip GPs to make the right steps to referral at the earliest stages. Together we tailor content in accordance to e-quiz results and develop case studies to show how to interpret guidance in practice. Attendance at our events equates to 5 CPD credits, and we provide a certificate for obtaining these.

As a specialist cancer centre, The Royal Marsden welcomes referrals from anywhere in the UK. Our events give GPs a forum in which to develop relationships with our consultants, ask questions about patients they may wish to refer and find out more about the services we offer.

Our next GP education day is on Tuesday 18 October 2016 where we will be covering blood and head and neck cancers. This event will be held at The Royal Marsden in Sutton from 9.30am – 4pm. The morning session will cover head and neck diagnosis, including a seminar on the oral cancer toolkit from guest speaker Dr Richard Roope, Cancer Research UK Clinical Champion for Cancer. The afternoon will focus on Myeloma, CLL and Lymphoma and latest NICE guidelines for blood cancers. [Register here](#) to attend.

If you would like to get involved in shaping our programme or have any suggestions, we would like to hear from you. Please email gpeducation@rmh.nhs.uk