AWCG Newsletter 2018

ASIAN WOMEN CANCER GROUP

Message from the Chairperson

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2018 edition of our newsletter. Happy New Year! Hope 2018 brings you all the joy and happiness.

I am glad to say that our increasing membership reflects a general recognition of the positive role support groups play in healing. A number of our new members have reported feeling lost after the completion of their cancer treatment and having peer support through joining our group has given them courage and strength to embrace life. Such positive feedback makes our job worthwhile.

It has been a really busy year with various activities that our wonderful group participated in. We raised awareness at local community and medical centres. We hosted a fantastic Mother's day celebration which is popular event of the group. We took part in a broadcast about the taboos Asian women face when diagnosed with cancer. We had our biannual group fundraising events which were a huge success. We had a beautiful day trip to Runnymede and also to the Amravati Buddhist Temple. We also had a wide variety of speakers at our monthly evening meetings and we are just recovering from our end of year party and celebration where we were treated to wonderful music, delicious dinner and lots of dancing. We shall endeavour to continue this into 2018.

Our support for National Cancer charities also continues. As always our team was there at the Harrow Relay for Life to raise vital funds for the work of Cancer Research UK. We had a fantastic coffee morning with a twist which involved Indian 'Garba' folk dancing and we raised funds for Macmillan and Breast Cancer Care.

The attendance at the meetings has been increasing and our Yoga and Mindfulness activities remain the favourite group activities.

I remain indebted to all the committee members for their hard work and all our members for their continual support.

Kind Regards,

Kunji Patel, AWCG Chairperson

Nalini Mehta – My Cancer Journey

In February 2015, whilst on a holiday in Singapore, I developed a cough. On my return, it got worse and no remedies seemed to ease it or its discomfort. I finally visited my GP in April and this was the start of my cancer journey.

My GP suspected pnuemonia and I had to start a course of anitbiotics but an X-ray of my chest was also organised. A second X-ray followed after a fortnight which showed some patchy shadowing consistent with pneumonia. There was no improvement. A lung function test and bronchoscopy, and an urgent CT Scan followed which showed a right peri-hilar mass. Biopsies by endobronchial ultrasound and medastinoscopy were also arranged. This then suggested an indolent B cell Non Hodgkins Lymphoma but it was inconclusive as the sample taken was insufficient.

At this stage I was informed of a strong possibility of treatment with chemotherapy (R-Chop) once relevant blood, bone marrow aspirate and echocardiogram were done. Six sessions of chemotherapy would be needed and I was informed of the side effects of this treatment. A PET Scan also showed avid uptake in the left side of my thyroid and in some medistinal nodes. This prompted an urgent thyroid ultrasound and it was felt to be medullary thyroid carcinoma which is genetic and rare. 24Hr urine metanephrines, repeat calcitonin, bone profile and MEN-2 genetic testing was organised. An involvement of visits to 3 hospitals namely, Northwick Park, Hammersmith and St Mary's.

The ultrasound confirmed the cancer as malignant and needed immediate removal. However, it was still unclear of the stage of my Non Hodgkins Lymphoma and a second mediastinoscopy was urgently required to confirm this.

I had two different cancers to face. My life was on hold and I was frightened. I was not sleeping and losing more weight. I couldn't attend social events and could not hold a conversation due to my persistent cough. I looked after my 2 grandchildren and one day one of them asked if I was going to die. This hurt and I pushed for the procedures to be done as soon as possible with both the endocrine and cardiothoracic departments.

I investigated wearing wigs and trimmed my hair as I knew I would be losing my hair once chemo started. My sister, a homeopath, recommended that I took a remedy of tumeric powder mixed with olive oil, black pepper powder and pure aloe vera juice every morning. I also read Anita Moorjani's, 'Dying To Be Me' and got inspired. Life had thrown many challenges at me and I realised and accepted this as another. It is what it is! I received tremendous and unconditional support from my partner, my son and his family and other family members who accompanied me to my appointments.

Finally in October 2015, a total thyroidectomy, mediastinal biopsy and lymph node clearance of 23 nodes was performed. A few weeks later, a second PET scan was done and with the result of the second biopsy, it was confirmed that the Non Hodgkins Lymphoma in my chest was at stage 2 and no chemotherapy or radiotherapy was needed. I got back my life slowly but surely.

I am now on thyroxine and I have regular extensive blood tests for both conditions and the doctors are very pleased with my progress. Unfortunately, as medullary cancer is genetic my family members are looking into getting tests done. I visit the Haematology dept every 3 months and am aware of the symptoms should the Non Hodgkins Lymphoma progress. Meanwhile, I enjoy life and have not allowed the cancer to beat me.

Nalini Mehta

Highlights of 2017

Harrow Relay for Life

Macmillan Coffee Morning

AWCG Fundraising Event 2017

Breast Cancer Care 10 Year Celebration

End of Year Celebration

Other Information

From January 2018 all our meetings will be held at our new location:

Gateway House
North Harrow Car Park
Pinner Road, North Harrow
Middlesex, HA2 7TA

Transport Links to Gateway House
Gateway House stands in a large car park which is free after 6.30pm and at weekends. Gateway House is 1/4 of a mile from **North Harrow Station on the Metropolitan Line**. The buses **183** and **H9** and **H10** all stop near Gateway House.

Dates for your Diary
Look out on our website for the following events:

Mother's Day Event

Harrow Relay for Life

Summer Day Out

Summer Picnic

MaCmillan Coffee Morning

End of Year Celebration

Our Website: www.asianwomencancergroup.co.uk

Upcoming Events

AWCG would like to invite Members and Volunteers to our Daytime and Evening Meetings. The Daytime meetings are held from 1.30pm to 3.30pm and Evening meetings from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at: **Gateway House, North Harrow Car Park, Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 7TA**

2018 MEETING DATES

	Yoga 1.30-3.30pm	Mindfulness 1.30-3.30pm	Therapy/Drop in 1.30-3.30pm	Evening Meeting 7.00- 9.00pm
January	9th	16th	30th	26th Dr Reya Vaghela -GP
February	6th	13th	20th	23rd AGM Samixa Shah
March	6th	13th	20th	No meeting (Good Friday)
April	3rd	10th	17th	27th Bhavna Patel - Dietician
May	1st	8th	15th	25th Jacqueline Griffiths- Brent Carers
June	5th	12th	19th	29th Members Evening
July	3rd	10th	17th	27th Dr Mahesh Shah – Plant Based Nutrition
August	NO MEETING			
September	4th	11th	18th	28th Dr Narottam Thanvi - Oncologist
October	2nd	9th	16th	26th Dr L Sodha -Chiropractor
November	No meeting	13th	20th	30th Sushma Sanghvi- Extended scope Practitioner and Physiotherapist Wellbeing – A Holistic approach to Health
December	NO MEETING			

Recipe

Thai Mango Salad (recipe provided by Elka Bhatt)

Ingredients
3 Large half ripe and firm Mangoes* shredded
10 Cherry tomatoes cut in half
6 Spring onions cut at an angle
10 French beans finely cut
½ Cup coarsely ground roasted peanuts
¼ bunch of coarse cut coriander

Dressing
5 Lime kafir lime leaves
3 Red chillies
2 cloves garlic
1 tablespoonful jiggery
1 tablespoonful tamarind
Salt to taste
Coarsely grind with pestle and mortar

Mix everything just before serving
* Mangoes can be replaced with raw papaya

For further information about AWCG please contact:

Telephone 1: 07934 591384
Telephone 2: 07968 386798
Email: info@asianwomencancergroup.co.uk

Visit us at **www.asianwomencancergroup.co.uk** or

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Newsletter Editor – Priti Shah