On Target

January 2014

News from Target Ovarian Cancer

Be Clear on Cancer  Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month  Genetic testing
Welcome
This second issue of On Target is packed with exciting news – the first ovarian cancer awareness TV adverts being trialled in North West England (page 5), further evidence of the benefits of Avastin (Bevacizumab) on page 4 and another phenomenally successful Walk for One Million (see page 3).

You’ll also read about Dr Marc Tischkowitz, who is leading the Genetic Testing in Epithelial Ovarian Cancer (GTEOC) trial which we have funded. I met Marc recently to talk about the trial – it’s assessing how practical and beneficial it is to offer genetic testing to all women who are newly diagnosed with the most common types of ovarian cancer. Without you, our fundraisers and supporters, GTEOC wouldn’t exist. You can find out more on page 6.

And finally, Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is just around the corner. There’s something for everyone, and we hope you’ll join us to raise money and raise awareness of ovarian cancer.

I hope you enjoy the issue!

Annwen Jones
Chief Executive

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Helping GPs spot patients who may have cancer

Over 9,500 (nearly a quarter of the GPs in the UK) have completed Target Ovarian Cancer’s free-to-access online continuing professional development tools, produced with both BMJ Learning and the Royal College of GPs.

Ask your GP to visit www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/gp

Small steps have a huge impact

Saturday 5 October 2013 was the day when more than 350 of you made every step count at our 2013 Walk for One Million, held in the grounds of Hatfield House in Hertfordshire.

In just two years the Walk for One Million has raised well over a quarter of a million pounds. Our heartfelt thanks to each and every person who took part.

To register your interest in our 2014 event email walk@targetovarian.org.uk or call 020 7923 5474.

Upcoming dates
Our Being Together days are coming to Liverpool on 14th January, Southampton on 13th March, and Cardiff on 12th May. Call Mike on 020 7923 5475 or email mfeakes@targetovarian.org.uk to find out more.
New evidence supports call for rethink on drug access

New survival data from the ICON7 trial suggests that some women treated with Avastin (Bevacizumab) are surviving advanced ovarian cancer longer than those treated without it. But currently it is only available to women in England, via the Cancer Drugs Fund (more details on page 10).

Frances Reid, our Director of Public Affairs and Services, said: “New evidence shows that Avastin can give women between five and nine months extra life. The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Scottish Medicines Consortium must use this new evidence to reconsider their decisions to reject routine use of the drug on grounds of cost effectiveness.

“This could then ensure that women in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland could also have access if it is appropriate for them.”

“Access to Avastin should be given according to need, not a woman’s postcode.”

Sharon Graham, Scotland (above)

A new Be Clear on Cancer pilot awareness campaign on the symptoms of ovarian cancer will run in the North West and Borders region of England in February and March 2014.

News EXTRA: regional awareness campaign to focus on ovarian cancer

This regional campaign follows the success of six local pilots run early in 2013 by the Department of Health.

It will feature the first ever TV adverts highlighting symptoms of ovarian cancer. The main message, as in the pilots, will be, ‘Feeling bloated most days for 3 weeks or more? See your doctor.’ Target Ovarian Cancer’s training tools for GPs will also be used as part of the campaign to support GPs.

If you’re in the North West of England we want your feedback on the Be Clear on Cancer campaign. Post your thoughts and photos on our Facebook page, email info@targetovarian.org.uk or write to us at 30 Angel Gate, London EC1V 2PT.

“I’m grateful to all those women like me who campaigned alongside the All Party Parliamentary Group; to the MPs who demanded change; and to charities like Target Ovarian Cancer for their unrelenting support”.

Eilish Hoole, Campaigner

Keep up to date
We want to share developments around ovarian cancer and our work with you as often as possible in a way that suits you. Why not sign up to our monthly e-newsletter? To sign up email info@targetovarian.org.uk

Fact finder
Our Pathfinder Study 2012 showed that just 17% of women recognise persistent bloating as a major symptom of ovarian cancer.

In one of the Be Clear on Cancer local pilots, the number of women saying that they were “very/fairly confident” in their knowledge of the symptoms of ovarian cancer rose from 20% to 31%.
Angelina Jolie hit the headlines when she announced she carries the faulty BRCA1 gene and had had a preventative mastectomy. Mutations in the BRCA1/BRCA2 gene are known to increase a woman’s risk of breast cancer but it is less well known that they can also increase the risk of ovarian cancer.

Too many women with faulty BRCA1/BRCA2 genes have told us they’ve survived breast cancer or had preventative mastectomies but then developed ovarian cancer. Knowing your BRCA status could, in future, affect treatment decisions.

If we find that genetic testing at or around diagnosis is both feasible and acceptable, we will use this evidence to persuade key policy makers that all women who are diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the UK should be tested for BRCA1/BRCA2 mutations.

Clinical trials: a professional perspective

Dr Marc Tischkowitz is leading the Target Ovarian Cancer funded clinical study to assess the feasibility and acceptability of testing all women newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer to see if they carry the BRCA gene mutation.

“Up to 40% of women who carry a genetic predisposition to developing cancer are not offered genetic testing because family histories are poorly recorded, unknown or their family size is too small for such risks to have become apparent.

“For any cancer patient, finding out that they have an inherited gene mutation can prompt so many questions. ‘How will I cope?’ ‘How do I tell my family and friends?’ ‘What sort of treatment will I need?’ ‘Is preventative surgery an option?’ ‘Does this mean that members of my family are at risk too?’

“That’s why it is so crucial that anyone being genetically tested has access to genetic counselling and the wide implications of testing are explained.

“Without vital funds from Target Ovarian Cancer, this study wouldn’t happen.”

Dr Marc Tischkowitz, University of Cambridge (above)
March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Will you raise awareness of ovarian cancer and raise money for us in March 2014?

Get involved: Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month is a crucial time to come together to raise awareness of ovarian cancer. Why not join us in March with the 50s Challenge, to tell 50 people about the symptoms of ovarian cancer and raise £50 towards our work? Or let us know about other awareness and fundraising events you are running!

We’ll be sending out information packs later this month. For extra copies, email fundraising@targetovarian.org.uk or call 020 7923 5474.

May means the return of Loving Linda

On Sunday 11 May, the Loving Linda comedy gala in aid of Target Ovarian Cancer returns to the Rose Theatre in Kingston upon Thames. A great night of comedy and music, Loving Linda is an annual event in memory of the much-loved comedian Linda Smith.

Grab your tickets today! Call 0844 482 1356 or go to www.rosetheatrekingston.org

Get inspired: our fundraising heroes

If challenges or fundraising aren’t for you, there are still a lot of other great ways you can support the work we do.

Chris Shagouri from Leeds was diagnosed with ovarian cancer six years ago. She’s been involved with our work in a number of ways since, including campaigning at Westminster, talking to local media to raise awareness and leaving a gift in her will.

“I have been very grateful for the support I’ve received from Target Ovarian Cancer,” said Chris. “I am leaving a gift in my will to the charity because I want to help women like me in the future to lead a long and good life. Too many women’s lives are lost to ovarian cancer and I want to play my part in changing that.”

If you’d like to know more about leaving a gift in your will, download an info pack at www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/legacy. Alternatively, call Anthea Andre on 020 7923 5474 and we’ll send you one in the post.

“Too many women’s lives are lost to ovarian cancer and I want to play my part in changing that.”

Chris Shagouri (left)

Hadrian’s Wall

July is when we’ll trek along Hadrian’s Wall. Join us from 11-13 July to trek 25 miles along sections of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, including Roman ruins and breath-taking views.

Registration is £49 and minimum sponsorship is just £550. For more details, call 020 7923 5474 or visit our website at www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/hadrians

SAVE THE DATE: World Ovarian Cancer Day is 8 May 2014.
Since 2011, the fund has ring-fenced £200 million a year of the NHS budget for cancer treatments which have not been assessed by NICE or are not cost effective enough for wider use on the NHS.

The Cancer Drugs Fund gives people in England the chance to access drugs that are otherwise unavailable through the NHS.

The Cancer Drugs Fund ring-fences £200 million of NHS budget every year for treatments not widely available on the NHS, but only in England.

“What patients want is every opportunity to have the best chance at treatment, which is why I’ve had to move 150-miles away from my home in Cardiff.”

Annie Mulholland (right)

How people power can prompt positive change

The Welsh Assembly Government is reviewing the variability in access to drugs available on the NHS thanks to mounting pressure from campaigners like Annie Mulholland from Cardiff. Her persistent campaigning has shown the Welsh Assembly Government that the system lacks consistency and transparency.

She even featured on the BBC’s ‘The Wales Report’ programme about the issue. The programme challenged Wales’ Chief Medical Officer, Ruth Hussey, on the wide variability in the rate of approval for drugs in Wales.

Hussey responded by saying there would not be a specific cancer fund for Wales but there was a need to review the objectivity, fairness and transparency of such decisions. That review is now underway.

Annie first highlighted the variability of access to Avastin in Wales when Target Ovarian Cancer asked her to present evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ovarian Cancer. She then met the Welsh Health Minister Mark Drakeford to share her experiences and insight and to highlight the urgent need for an ovarian cancer symptoms awareness campaign in Wales.
March is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month!

Take up our 50s Challenge to tell 50 people about the symptoms of ovarian cancer and raise £50 towards our work.

Look out for your guide coming to you soon or visit our website www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/ocam