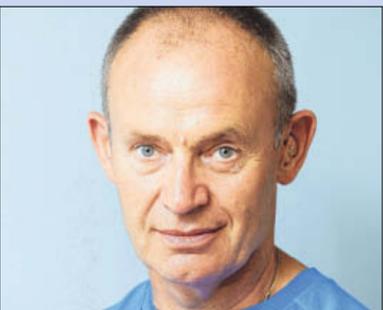


DEPRESSION 'POINTER' TO PARKINSON'S



STUBBORN . . . John won't give in to disease

ROBIN WILLIAMS was in the early stages of Parkinson's disease when he took his own life, his wife revealed last week. Here, John St John-Mosse, 57, a self-employed fitness instructor from Morden, Surrey, tells HELEN GILBERT how he copes with the condition which affects one in 500 Brits.

My diagnosis came out of the blue when I was 52. I'd been having trouble with tendonitis and bone spurs in my right shoulder and after two operations I still wasn't right.

I went back to see my surgeon, who noticed my right hand was shaking and asked why.

"I'd put it down to the surgery but immediately he referred me to a neurologist. I was asked to do a couple of exercises.

One involved opening and closing my fingers quickly and I couldn't do it.

Then I was asked to repeatedly draw circles on a piece of paper. I could only manage one before I started shaking.

I was sent for a scan. When doctors called me back they diagnosed Parkinson's disease.

My wife burst into tears. I didn't know much about it, just that Michael J Fox and Muhammad Ali had it and it didn't sink in at the time.

Parkinson's affects different people in different ways and I'm quite fortunate. My consultant says he hasn't seen a significant change in six years. I'm on eight tablets

a day, including ropinirole and selegiline to control tremors.

I find myself having to consciously try to straighten up. I get tired easily and I can't write, which annoys me because it's such a simple thing.

However, I'm still very active and cycle every day.

Since my diagnosis I have jumped out of a plane and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro. In November I am going to Thailand to raise money for a charity.

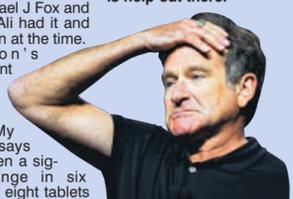
I am stubborn and will not let Parkinson's get me down.

Steve Ford, the chief executive of Parkinson's UK, said: "Depression can be one of the first signs that Parkinson's is developing. The brain cells that control movement start to die.

"This may have been happening up to ten years before the classic symptoms – slowness, muscle stiffness and tremors – start to show.

"There isn't a cure but drugs are available to deal with the symptoms.

"Encouraging people to get care and support is vital. We're here to make sure no one has to face Parkinson's alone. There is help out there."



DISEASE'S FACTS

- The incurable neurodegenerative condition affects 127,000 people in the UK.
- People with Parkinson's don't have enough of a chemical called dopamine because specific nerve cells inside their brain have died.
- Symptoms include uncontrollable shakes, muscle stiffness and slowness of movement though not everyone will experience all these.
- It mainly occurs in males over the age of 50.
- Symptoms worsen over time and can make simple tasks such as eating or getting dressed difficult or frustrating.
- Parkinson's UK predicts there will be a 28 per cent rise in the number of people diagnosed by 2020.
- For more information see parkinsons.org.uk.

PLEA FOR MORE FUNDING TO



MENACE . . . pancreatic cancer cells

EXCLUSIVE by MATTHEW BARBOUR

CANCER ward assistant Kerry Harvey was in the prime of her life when she was diagnosed with the pancreatic form of the disease.

She had been looking forward to finishing her paramedic training and starting a family.

But six months ago Kerry died from her cancer, aged just 24.

Pancreatic cancer claims the lives of 23 people in the UK every day and more than 8,000 a year – and that number is on the rise.

It is Britain's fifth biggest cancer killer but gets far less research funding than other types of the illness.

In 2011, the major funders spent £507.3million on cancer research but just £5.2million on pancreatic studies, the National Cancer Research Institute reports.

The charity Cancer Action warns that this is causing fatal delays in diagnosis.

Kerry's mum Eileen is campaigning to change this.

She said: "Cancer should not be the death sentence it was 40 years ago."

However, those with pancreatic cancer have little hope.

"Only one in five last a year after diagnosis and the chance of being alive after five years is three per cent."

"Had Kerry had breast cancer, the chances of her celebrating her 25th birthday with us would have been more than 95 per cent."

Kerry made it her mission in her final few months to raise awareness of pancreatic cancer.

"I wish I had breast cancer," she was quoted as saying in a controversial campaign for Pancreatic Cancer Action which earned her death threats from breast cancer survivors and families who had lost loved ones to the disease.

Of the three pancreatic cancer patients who featured in the campaign earlier

this year, only one remains. This is something Eileen, who lives in Acocks Green, Birmingham, with her husband, Alan, a 56-year-old cycle shop manager, says shouldn't be the case.

She said: "Kerry first started getting stomach cramps, then severe itching on her hands. Aside from these she had no other symptoms."

"Every time she went to her GP she was just given painkillers. She was told she had had an ectopic pregnancy, then a stomach ulcer."

Months after she first complained of stomach pains, Kerry was admitted to

A&E at St Richard's Hospital in her home town, Chichester, with agonising abdominal cramps.

Like 50 per cent of people with pancreatic cancer, it was A&E where her condition was diagnosed. Scans showed she had a tumour on her pancreas, which had spread to her liver.

Eileen, a home care worker, continued: "Neither Alan nor I had heard of pancreatic cancer before so were hoping to hear good news about the treatment Kerry would get."

"She never smoked, only drank alcohol very occasionally and was very healthy.



CAMPAIGN . . . Kerry, Eileen with pic of Kerry, and controversial poster

FIGHT THE 'SILENT KILLER'

My daughter would still be here today if she'd suffered cancer of the breast, not the pancreas

Also, she was only 23, which seemed impossibly young to get any type of cancer."

But Eileen, 50, who also has daughter Amy, 21, soon discovered there was no chance of her recovery. Kerry's cancer was too advanced and she could only have palliative treatment.

Knowing she was in her final days, Kerry and fiancé Matt, a 30-year-old team leader, brought their wedding forward and tied the knot in hospital. Three days later, Kerry died.

Eileen said: "We just sat staring at our beautiful girl, wondering how this could have happened."

"I was relieved her suffering was over but also so incredibly angry. People like Kerry can't keep on dying with pancreatic cancer."

"It is effectively a death sentence. This needs to change."

"Kerry was so brave, inspirational and selfless being part of this campaign. I'm

determined to keep my beautiful daughter's legacy going and have been busy organising a number of fundraising events in her memory."

The Harvey family and their friends have so far raised more than £7,500 for Pancreatic Cancer Action.

Ali Stunt, CEO of the charity, said: "Pancreatic cancer has been chronically underfunded and neglected for decades."

"A Parliamentary debate is scheduled for September 8 but the follow-on is what is important to drive change."

"While no early detection method or screening tool exists, greater awareness of pancreatic cancer and its symptoms is vital to saving lives."

"If people are diagnosed earlier and are able to have surgery, their chance of survival increases tenfold."

● To make a donation to the Harvey family, go to: justgiving.com/Eileen-Harvey1/. Encourage your GP to take PCA's e-learning module so more people get diagnosed earlier: elearning.rcgp.org.uk/course/info.php?id=103

'MY BROTHER KNEW HIS DAYS WERE NUMBERED'

ANDY LUCK died on July 27, after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in November 2011. He was quoted in the powerful PCA campaign as saying: "They said it was nothing. I believed them. Don't make the same mistake."

Here his sister Teresa Fagan, a 48-year-old school catering manager from Crawley, explains why she is going to carry on campaigning in his name.

For months, Andy, who worked as a paramedic, had been experiencing worsening digestive problems and back pain, but every time he went to his GP he was simply prescribed medication to treat stomach acid.

Nobody would take his concerns seriously, even when he lost a lot of weight.

Knowing something was wrong, he paid for his own CAT scan privately, which revealed he had an inflamed pancreas.

Doctors later told him he had pancreatic cancer and it was terminal.

He had aggressive chemotherapy and physiotherapy which made



him ill, but miraculously shrunk his tumour to the point where doctors said they could operate.

That ten-hour operation removed the tumour from the pancreas, as well as the majority of the pancreas, part of his intestines and his gall bladder. But, although that operation was deemed a success, Andy knew his days were numbered and the cancer would return. A few months later, tests showed cancer had spread. It was downhill from there.

Towards the end he looked so fragile and thin, but he shouldn't have had to die because of this disease.

More funding needs to be ploughed into pancreatic cancer research. Had this happened already, I might still have my brother.

That's why I've vowed to campaign. In Andy's words: 'If we can save just one person's life, it will be worth it.'

THE SYMPTOMS

- Pain in the upper abdomen which sometimes spreads to the back. It usually comes and goes at first but becomes constant as the cancer advances. The pain is often worse when eating or lying down.
- Unexplained weight loss.
- Jaundice, a yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes, dark yellow urine, pale stools and itchy skin.
- Diabetes, which causes excessive thirst, passing more urine than usual and weakness.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Shivering and fever.

'I WANT TO SEE MY GRANDKIDS'



PENNY LOW, a 51-year-old midwife from Farnham in Surrey, is the only surviving participant from the controversial campaign launched by Pancreatic Cancer Action. Penny's poster quoted her saying: "They call it the silent killer. But my symptoms weren't."

Here is her story:

I first noticed a lack of energy at Christmas 2012 and thought it was down to the weather. But by mid-February, I noticed a very vague pain on the left side of my chest.

At first, doctors thought I had a viral infection. But it's only when a CT scan picked up lesions in my left lung that I thought something serious was wrong.

In the April, I was told I had pancreatic cancer and only had months to live.

Luckily, I was offered the chance to try chemotherapy, after doctors said there was a chance my tumour might respond well to it.

After 12 cycles followed by 28 daily radiotherapy treatments combined with oral chemotherapy, I had the amazing news that my tumour had shrunk, so I could have my pancreas removed. Six weeks after

surgery I re-joined my gym and can now swim my usual 100 lengths again.

I've had my first all-clear check-up, with my next due in October, then every three months after that.

While I feel incredibly lucky to still be here, I also know I've only got a 25 to 30 per cent chance of survival beyond five years – but each year that passes, my percentage chance of survival increases.

Of course it's incredibly sad that both Andy and Kerry, who featured in the campaign, have died, but had more been invested in research into pancreatic cancer, they may still be with us now.

The terror of not wanting to die is my motivation to live. I want to see my children get married and have their own kids.

But statistics tell me that's unlikely to happen – that needs to change.

MOST DEADLY

THESE were the worst killer cancers in the UK in 2011, with the number of people who died from each, and the share each got in millions of pounds from the National Cancer Research Institute's £503million spending on the search for cures.

Lung	35,184	£14.2m
Bowel	15,659	£25m
Breast	11,762	£40.3m
Prostate	10,793	£22.2m
Pancreas	8,320	£5.2m