



Providing medical education

Cancers and diseases and conditions which are less common tend to get a bit of a backseat, which is a shame because you can't afford to do that with pancreatic cancer. It's one of the more aggressive ones. So [it is] imperative we educate GPs into recognising signs and symptoms very early on. That way we can get much quicker referral and hopefully, a better survival rate. I'm sure we can. It's just a question of pushing and pushing and making sure that GPs are on the ball every time.

One of the ways we can get GPs to become more aware of pancreatic cancer and all its implications is through e-learning modules. The e-learning module created for GPs in conjunction with Pancreatic Cancer Action and the Royal College of GPs is excellent because, first of all, it's free, it's excellent, it's really, really good and it counts towards continuing medical education. So, it counts towards appraisal and revalidation. So, by putting it up there and making GPs aware, they may not have covered it in their GP training, they may not have seen it much in the surgery, but they need to spot that one case that comes through the door. They can't afford to say, 'I'll see you in a couple of weeks and see how you're getting on.'. They need to make that diagnosis on the day or at least get the investigation started.

Early diagnosis is absolutely critical because once the cancer becomes inoperable, then the outlook is much poorer and symptoms often only display themselves quite late on. We know, for example, that prognosis at one year is about 20%, 5 years is 5%. It's crept up a little bit, it's getting a bit better - but not enough and only less than 1% survive 10 years. So, this is something we have to get a handle on, get that early diagnosis through being more aware, getting earlier investigations done and getting surgery done if possible if it's diagnosed early.

Saving lives through early diagnosis