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À: Diana Eastaff dianaeastaff@orange.fr



Supporting English speaking people living in Languedoc who are affected by cancer

CSF-L Newsletter - March 2021

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from Ali Kane

We were hoping to have clearer news for this Newsletter concerning when we might be able to hold a Drop-In day once again, but given the continuing Covid-19 restrictions and high number of daily positive tests, it is difficult for us to know just when that will be possible. The delay in availability of vaccines is a further impediment, as many of us would not wish to partake in any Group social event until fully vaccinated, and we do not wish to put anyone at risk.

In the meantime we can still offer some of the therapies normally on offer at Drop-In. Raket Persson is currently in Sweden until at least the end of March, but Sue Cartwright is offering Reiki, Massage and Reflexology at Beauty Box, Magalas, using all safety health precautions. She is also continuing to offer Distance Reiki, which you can enjoy in the safety of your own home. As Reiki is a form of healing done without actually touching the body, this version can be effective even when client and therapist are in different places, and each session begins and ends with a phone-call. If any of you would like to make use of these opportunities, please contact Alison Kane on alison.csflanguedoc@gmail.com.

Advances in Cancer Screening

A talk in English by Prof. Jean-Bernard Dubois, *President of la Ligue contre le cancer (Comité de l'Hérault) and former onco-radiologist and Director at ICM (Institut du Cancer de Montpellier)*

The significant improvement in cancer prognosis over recent years can be attributed to two main factors: advancements in treatment and earlier diagnosis through widespread screening.

The four main cancers for which screening is particularly effective are: breast, uterine cervix, colorectal and prostate cancers.

In this video talk, which is delivered in English, Prof. Dubois discusses cancer screening and takes questions from the audience.

DATE: Tuesday 23 March 2021

TIME: 2.30pm

PLACE: On line (access details to be provided to CSF-L members nearer the date)

If you are not a member of Cancer Support France - Languedoc and you would like to receive details of this event - please register your interest here: <https://mailchi.mp/67d4b276dd0d/csf-languedoc>

This video conference has been jointly organised by la Ligue contre le cancer (Comité de l'Hérault) and Cancer Support France – Languedoc.



HÉRAULT



French National Cancer Plan 2021-2030

Video-conference at the National Cancer Institute (Institut National du Cancer, INCa), on February 4th, World Cancer Day (Extract from a report written by Cat Hartley)

"Cancer rates have fallen over the last five years and outcomes are better." This was Professor Norbert Ifrah's opening statement at this video conference. He pointed out that a great deal has been achieved in terms of cancer prevention and improved screening but there is still much to be done, in particular, after-care to help people living with cancer.

Dr Douglas Lowry, an American cancer specialist, said "France has an outstanding record for cancer research [...]the nationally coordinated system of cancer care and research is exceptional."

After a panel discussion by 4 specialists and a representative of a patients' association and a Q&A session, President Macron outlined the strategic ambitions over the next 10 years in a filmed presentation.:

- greater research innovation
- 20% more finance (1,74 billion euros over 10 years to be rapidly available over the next 5 years)
- objectives to reduce deaths from 150,000 to 100,000 per year (there are currently 380,000 new cancer cases every year)

This will be achieved by:

- **Increased prevention.** 40% of all cancers can be avoided, but prevention is one of the weak points in the French system. Tobacco accounts for 70,000 new cases of cancer each year. Excessive alcohol consumption accounts for 1/5 of all cases. We need to develop more hygienic lifestyles including improved nutrition (using, for example, the Nutriscore** labels on food products), increased physical activity especially at school and improvements to the air that we breathe. (7 new low emissions zones being developed).
- **Better screening**, especially for colorectal cancers which are underused. (7 out of 10 people eligible for colorectal screening do not do the test.) ; inventing and improving tomorrow's screening tests ; the use of big data to analyse results from large numbers of patients, for example, and the reading of diagnostic scans using artificial intelligence.
- **Improved support for patients and their families during and after**

cancer. Faster implementation of research results and greater awareness of the long-term effects of living with cancer. More research and acceleration of the use of biotherapies, immunotherapies and genome therapies which cause less long-term collateral damage

- **The after-effects of cancer.** Living a long time with the after-effects of cancer must be taken into account. The “*droit à l’oubli*” (right to forget) has been a major step but does not go far enough. 20% of cancer patients do not get their jobs back.

The fight against cancer is a European fight with all forces united to achieve progress. Special funding will be allocated to children’s cancers where the cure rate is now 80% with 1,700 new cases in France every year. He stressed the importance that cancer treatments are free in France and thanked all those involved in treatment, care and research.

In closing, a different panel of experts and a patient representative welcomed the 10 year plan. There was general agreement that this was an ambitious project, resulting from two citizens’ consultations and many consultations with researchers, clinicians and patients.

There is still a need to improve cancer care throughout the country as there are large discrepancies between areas. The overall objectives are ambitious, with 234 new measures to be undertaken, including 1 million new cancer screenings every year, reducing by 60,000 the number of new treatable cancer cases throughout metropolitan France and its overseas territories.

** Nutri-Score is a front-of-pack nutritional label which converts the nutritional value of food and beverages into a simple overall score. It is based on a scale of 5 colours and letters (A is green to represent the best nutritional quality while E is dark orange to show it’s the lowest). More information is available [here](#).

Raising Awareness about Cancer during the Covid-19 pandemic

Submitted by Kate Le Mestre

Professor Axel Khan, President of La Ligue contre le cancer and renowned geneticist, has been particularly active in alerting the French government and the general population about the situation concerning actual and future cancer diagnoses and treatments throughout the past year of the Covid-19 crisis. A regular participant in French television debates, he has stressed the need for people to continue keeping their appointments for regular screening tests, particularly mammograms, smear tests for cervical cancer, PSA blood tests for prostate cancer, colorectal tests etc. and to not ignore health warnings that may need a rapid diagnosis.

Many people have avoided doctors’ surgeries and hospital services by fear of contamination from the coronavirus, leaving diagnosis later than usual and hence potentially involving the delayed onset of treatment should it be needed.

La Ligue contre le cancer has greatly improved its communication, with a participative website called Parlons Ligue and an enhanced attempt at interaction with the general population, covering important issues such as new

advances in treatments, screening campaigns and information about Covid testing and vaccination for those undergoing cancer treatments. There are discussion forums, witness statements from patients and carers and useful information about new treatment and screening campaigns. Information (in French) about Parlons Ligue is [here](#).

Axel Khan has also been active in asking for donations for continuing research into cancer diagnosis and treatment, particularly as the usual fund-raising events have not been possible due to restrictions on meetings and events.

He recently launched a particular appeal to support research into children's cancers, which although rare, require a special input involving maintaining of social and educational contacts and transferring innovative therapies from adults to children and young people, particularly new advances in immunotherapy.

International Childhood, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Day was on February 15th. Professor Khan's article (in French) on that subject, published in La Ligue's February 2021 newsletter, is available [here](#).

March in France is Mars bleu, the month for raising awareness of screening for colorectal screening



For information (in French) about colorectal cancer from the association, Patients en réseau, see [here](#). To fill out their questionnaire (in French) concerning colorectal screening, click [here](#).

The CSF association based in Paris are raffling a beautiful hand-made quilt in order to raise funds for CSF National

Graham Luck, CSF-L's National representative

Beautifully crafted in fine cotton and richly-coloured fabrics, this "Heart" quilt is exactly what one hopes for to enhance one's living space. The jewel-like prints are the designs of noted British-based textile artist Kaffe Fasset. Kaffe's work has been a continual inspiration to quilter Nan de Laubadère, one of CSF Paris's members. The organic abundance and sheer joy embodied in his patterns conveys the hope and solace we offer our clients.

You can help support the work of CSF by purchasing raffle tickets here: <http://bit.ly/2KMF7cG> . Tickets are 5€ each, with a special rate of 5 tickets for 20€. The winning ticket will be drawn at their Annual General Meeting, to be held online in March..

The proceeds received from the raffle will go towards the costs of upgrading the CSF National website which will benefit all Associations.



What's New in the World of Cancer Research?

Here we bring you links that you might find interesting to explore. Click on the title to see the entire article.

[CT scan catches 70% of lung cancers at early stage, NHS study finds](#)

Thousands of lives could be saved if people at risk of developing Britain's deadliest cancer were screened to diagnose it before it becomes incurable, a major NHS study has found. Giving smokers and ex-smokers a CT scan uncovers cancerous lung tumours when they are at an early enough stage so they can still be removed, rather than continuing to grow unnoticed, it shows.

[Ionic liquid uniformly delivers chemotherapy to tumours while destroying cancerous tissue](#)

Vascular and interventional radiologists report the development of a new ionic liquid formulation that killed cancer cells and allowed uniform distribution of a chemotherapy drug into liver tumours and other solid tumours in the lab. This discovery could solve a problem that has long plagued drug delivery to tumours.

[An end to invasive biopsies? Researchers advance simple and inexpensive diagnostic blood test](#)

Researchers have found a less invasive and more accurate options for diagnoses using a simple blood test that detects DNA fragments.

[Reviving exhausted immune cells to fight cancer. Removing a key gene could help T cells effectively attack solid tumours](#)

Eliminating a single gene can turn exhausted cancer-fighting immune cells known as CD8+ T cells back into refreshed soldiers that can continue to battle malignant tumours, a new study suggests. The findings could offer a new way to harness the body's immune system to attack cancers.

['Achilles' heel' of cancer cells revealed. Research could lead to development of future drugs to eliminate the cells](#)

A new study shows, for the first time, how an abnormal number of chromosomes (aneuploidy) -- a unique characteristic of cancer cells that researchers have known about for decades -- could become a weak point for these cells. The study could lead to the development of future drugs that will use this vulnerability to eliminate the cancer cells.

[Genetic changes in tumours could help predict if patients will respond to immunotherapy](#)

Researchers have identified genetic changes in tumours which could be used to predict if immunotherapy drugs would be effective in individual patients.

[Cancer research expands body's own immune system to kill tumours. Scientists are working to expand the way they have made immune cells fight tumours from a small handful of cancers to a wide array of them](#)

Scientists are hoping advances in cancer research could lead to a day when a patient's own immune system could be used to fight and destroy a wide range of tumours. Cancer immunotherapy has some remarkable successes, but its effectiveness has been limited to a relatively small handful of cancers.

Researchers describe how advances in engineering models of tumours can greatly expand cancer immunotherapy's effectiveness to a wider range of cancers.

[Toward a disease-sniffing device that rivals a dog's nose](#)

A new system can detect the chemical and microbial content of an air sample with even greater sensitivity than a dog's nose. Researchers coupled this to a machine-learning process that can identify the distinctive characteristics of the disease-bearing samples.

Book Recommendations and Reviews



Many of you will have enjoyed catching up on your reading during these last past months, and we are inviting suggestions for any books you may like to recommend. Please send any suggestions to [Ann Maher](#). Ann will be happy to watch out for a copy among the donations she receives or help you to buy a copy (in print or the Kindle edition).

I have two recommendations this month and will happily lend either book to anyone interested

anyone interested.

'The Children of Jocasta' by Natalie Haynes (2017)

Natalie Haynes has a passionate love of the classics, and I just wish I had had someone like her as my History teacher at school. She weaves stories from the classics into a vividly fresh reality, enjoying giving the spotlight to some of the lesser characters. In this book, she takes a fresh perspective on an ancient story, reimagining how the Oedipus and Antigone stories would look if the often-overlooked female characters took centre stage. I read this book soon after the first Lockdown began last year, and I was especially gripped by the description of the plague that hit Thebes, as I realised that we were experiencing a modern-day equivalent!

'Holding' by Graham Norton (2016)

This is Graham Norton's first novel, and I think astonished all who first read it, as it shows a completely different side to this popular chat-show host and actor. He is a real writer, and he breathes life into a cast of characters living in a sleepy town in West Cork, Ireland. He writes with pathos and empathy, whilst managing a delicate characterisation spiced with a gentle and understanding humour.

This small town is just going through its usual daily life until the discovery of human bones unearthed during re-development. Enter the bumbling Sergeant P.J. Collins, who now finds himself having to sort through decades of gossip and secrets to solve a mysterious crime....

A couple of quotes, to give you a taste of Norton's writing:

"A limp spring onion draped itself over the edge of the wicker basket that displayed the fresh produce in the O'Driscolls' shop, Cafe and Post Office. It shared the space with a shrivelled red pepper, while the basket above it held a few sweaty-looking bags of carrots. On the ground was a large sack of potatoes. Brown paper bags dangled from string to allow eager shoppers to make their own selection from the enticing display."

And:

"She felt like she needed to anchor herself to something or she might fly around the room screaming out her pain like a hysterical balloon."

Alison Kane

Watch this Space!



Having recently introduced book recommendations/reviews, we're now planning to add music and film reviews to our newsletter.

Hannah's Clothes Sales



No dates have been set yet for Hannah's next Clothes Sale. We'll have news in our next newsletter.



Ann's Books



Lots of films and books to help pass the evenings under curfew. As always, all donations go to CSF-L.

Ann says:

For both **books & DVDs**, click [HERE](#). Books are arranged by category, and DVDs are arranged by audience in nine "libraries". New items will be added when kind people (like you) pass them on to me. *Please note: Ann cannot guarantee to add every item donated.*

Here's how it works

First come, first served!

Copy and paste the title/s from the website (<https://booksale34.libib.com/>) into an email to books.csflanguedoc@gmail.com and I will arrange to deliver or post them to you.

I'm very happy to keep an eye out for your favourite authors/directors when new titles are donated. Just let me know and I'll reserve for you!

All proceeds from my book sales go to CSF - Languedoc. You can make a donation to CSF-L either on delivery or online [HERE](#).

Thank you! Looking forward to seeing you in person again soon.

Ann

Change of postal/email address or telephone number

If you've moved and/or changed your email address or telephone number, please let [Ann](#) know so that we can up-date our records. Thank you!

Download the App - TousAntiCovid

The app *TousAntiCovid* is being discussed as an essential tool to slow down the spread of the virus. As you know the situation is getting critical in France. It contains the most up to date Attestation too! Click this link <https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/tousanticovid> for more information.

Contributors this month:

Hilary Galea
Cat Hartley
Alison Kane
Ann Maher
Carole Lavergne

Kate Le Mestre
Graham Luck
Jackie Keefe - Editor
Steve Tomashefsky - Production
Editor

The Last Word

As we go to press, we are waiting to see whether there will be tighter restrictions again in France in order to continue to reduce the number of cases of Covid-19. This has been an especially difficult time for people whose failing health puts them in the High Risk category and equally so for those people who assist those vulnerable people. Our Active Listeners have continued to work during the restrictions, providing support in the best way possible while keeping within the rules. Thank you to all those of you contributing to the support and wellbeing of our clients. We will continue to keep you informed via our Bulletins.



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Cancer Support France - Languedoc
20 bis Quartier de Sercognes
34800 Nebian 34800
France

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