



New Survey highlights shockingly low public awareness of kidney cancer¹, despite more deaths each year than road accidents^{2,3}

- Kidney cancer is the least heard of cancer when compared to a range of other types of the disease¹, even though it is the eighth most common form³
- Worryingly, over one in ten (11%) people who have experienced blood in their urine, an early symptom of kidney cancer, have not had it checked out by a medical professional¹
- The James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer and Kidney Cancer UK are launching a series of impactful films to help raise awareness of this cruel disease

London, 20 August 2009. The James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer, with support from Kidney Cancer UK, today announces new research that shows a shockingly low awareness and understanding of kidney cancer amongst the Great British (GB) general public. The YouGov survey of 2,145 GB adults shows that kidney cancer is the least heard about form of the disease, with only 2% of GB adults having heard much about it when compared to a range of other cancers¹. Interestingly, over half of GB adults (54%) claim to have heard most about cervical cancer and 42% for leukaemia, even though there are fewer cases of these diseases than kidney cancer each year.³ According to the survey, only half (56%) of GB adults have ever even heard of the term 'kidney cancer'.¹

"The results from this survey are concerning. Every day in Britain, around 30 people find out they have kidney cancer,"³ said Professor Tim Eisen, Professor of Medical Oncology at the University of Cambridge. "If caught early, surgeons can remove kidney cancer and cure the patient. This survey shows that most British adults don't know what the symptoms of the disease are. Perhaps as a result, early symptoms such as blood in the urine are being missed. We have developed effective drugs to control advanced kidney cancer, but the only way to cure the disease is to destroy the cancer before it has spread."

According to the survey, only 5% of GB adults correctly identify smoking as the probable main cause of kidney cancer.¹ This is particularly concerning given that cigarette smokers are thought to be twice as likely as non-smokers to develop kidney cancer.⁴ Over a quarter (27%) of GB adults mistakenly cite alcohol as the main probable cause.¹

Kidney cancer accounts for around 3,700 deaths annually, which is more than die on the roads each year. In the UK, the number of people diagnosed with kidney cancer has increased by 22% over the last ten years.³

The findings of this survey coincide with the launch of a series of new films that aim to help increase awareness of this devastating disease. The main film entitled *Kidney Cancer: Jane's Journey*, was commissioned by the James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer and

Kidney Cancer UK in co-sponsorship with Novartis Oncology, Red Health and Day For Night Films. The film highlights the personal journey of 50 year old Jane Thompson, a mother of three from Birmingham, who was diagnosed with advanced and incurable kidney cancer in 2007.

James Whale, Founder of the James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer, and himself a patient having been diagnosed with Kidney Cancer in the year 2000 describes *Kidney Cancer: Jane's Journey* as "an impactful and incredibly moving account of the reality of living with advanced kidney cancer and the unquestionable importance of extended time for these people thanks to medical advances in this area. Through Jane's strength and determination, the film conveys a sense of hope as viewers watch her 'squeeze the most out of every minute' that she has left with her family. In the film Jane successfully attempts to break down the 'taboo' of death by showing the fantastic things that can be achieved in life, even when you're confronted with a terminal diagnosis."

Jane Thompson herself says: "When I was diagnosed a couple of years ago I knew very little about kidney cancer, so I feel very passionately about anything that serves to increase awareness both with the public and the medical profession."

Kidney Cancer: Jane's Journey is available to view on You Tube at the following address: www.youtube.com/kidneycancerfilms. Jane also keeps a blog, which can be viewed at: <http://a-journey-of-another-kind.blogspot.com/>. The film is housed alongside other educational clips intended to showcase the plight of those living with kidney cancer and highlight the importance of hope for those who have been affected by the disease. BBC News presenter, Nicholas Owen, Founder of the James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer, James Whale, Kidney Cancer Trustee, Pat Hanlon, Professor of Medical Oncology, Tim Eisen and carer and Kidney Cancer UK member, Jackie Lowe, all share their experiences in the educational clips that accompany the film.

The survey and launch of the films have been funded by an unrestricted grant from Novartis Oncology, a division of Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Ltd, to the James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer.

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Notes to Editors

About kidney cancer

The most common type of kidney cancer is renal cell carcinoma (RCC). In RCC, cancer cells develop in the lining of the kidney's tubes and grow into a tumour.

Kidney cancer accounts for 2% of all new cancer cases worldwide with occurrence rates rising steadily around the world due in part to smoking and obesity.⁵

In the UK, kidney cancer has increased by 22% over the last ten years.³ Each year, approximately 7,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with kidney cancer, which also causes around 3,700 deaths each year.³

Kidney cancer is most commonly found in people between the ages of 50 and 70, and typically affects men.⁶

There are several warning signals of kidney cancer. The first sign is usually blood in the urine.⁶ Other symptoms include, but are not limited to, abnormal urine colour, upper abdominal pain or back pain, unintentional weight loss of more than 5% body weight, swelling or enlargement of the abdomen, vision abnormalities and paleness.⁶

About the survey

The survey was conducted using an online interview administered members of the YouGov Plc GB panel of 185,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,145 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 20th - 22nd July 2009. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).¹

About the James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer and Kidney Cancer UK

The James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer is the UK's leading specialist kidney cancer charity. It seeks to help reduce the harm caused by kidney cancer by increasing knowledge and awareness, providing patient information and by supporting research into the causes, prevention and treatment of the disease. The James Whale Fund is registered charity No. 1120146.

Kidney Cancer UK was founded in January 2000 by Keith Taylor and Dick Williams, two kidney cancer patients. It aims to provide UK kidney cancer patients and their carers with improved access to reliable information about kidney cancer and its treatment, and to establish a network of individuals and groups capable of offering mutual support. Kidney Cancer UK is registered charity No. 1089119.

References

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