

Bowel Cancer

As the secretary of the Health & Safety committee I recently received an invitation from Lynn Faulds Wood to attend the House of Lords for a summit on bowel cancer. Some of you may remember Lynn as the presenter of Watchdog back in the 1980s and 1990s and know that she is not shy. Lynn has survived bowel cancer hence her passion on the subject.

I thought the police service with an ageing workforce, shift working with longer hours, the potential for poor eating habits and additional stress in these austere times would benefit if our membership knew a little more about the subject.

I have friends and colleagues that have suffered with bowel cancer but knew little about the subject myself. One of the main problems that Lynn spoke about was the apparent reluctance for people to talk about this particular disease which, if caught early enough, has a great survival rate. Lynn told me that most people are not caught early enough and there are thousands of unnecessary deaths every year.

The target audience for the launch of this campaign are men in their 50s, which now unfortunately includes me. Unless you have a family history of bowel cancer, there is currently no NHS screening process until you reach the age of 60 (50 in Scotland). However, there is nothing to stop you checking your own symptoms and providing your own screening. (See website links below for further information)

The summit was well attended by lead members of various groups including the armed services, SAGA, the Catholic church, the Women's Institute to name but a few. Some startling statistics were given by Lynn in that **8,000** of our 140,000 members are likely to get bowel cancer at some time in their lives as it is so common. Of these about 50% are likely to die, which equates to around **4,000** people.

There are many things you can do to reduce the chances of getting bowel cancer and one thing I did not know is that taking Aspirin from the age of 50 is not only good for the heart but is also good for reducing bowel cancer and other cancers and conditions. Lynn has made a helpful video on this.

The object of this article is to draw your attention to the One Click Campaign aimed at reducing bowel cancer so please, if you do nothing else, have a look at www.bowelcancer.tv/oneclickcampaign

Other resources to consider: www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk
www.bowelcancer.tv
www.haveigotbowelcancer.com

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PFEW Health & Safety Committee Secretary



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