



MEDIA RELEASE

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HUNDREDS WALK THE TALK IN HYDE PARK LONDON FOR MOUTH CANCER AWARENESS



Hundreds of people from all across the country turned out to support a Free 10K sponsored walk in London's Hyde Park on Sunday 19 November organised by the Mouth Cancer Foundation to raise awareness about Mouth Cancer in a grand finale to Mouth Cancer Awareness Week.

The Mouth Cancer Foundation's first official Mouth Cancer Walk was a huge success attracting cancer survivors, carers, health professionals and well wishers from all over the country. Free mouth cancer screenings for the public and participants were provided by experts from the Oral Medicine department of the UCL Eastman Dental Institute using the mobile dental screening unit provided by the Department of Community Special Care Dentistry at Kings College London Dental Institute.

Signs displaying one of the top ten symptoms of mouth cancer were spaced every 1K to educate the walkers and public in Hyde Park. All walkers wore free official Mouth Cancer Walk t-shirts over their coats, creating incredible awareness among the public. Mouth cancer survivors wore distinct sashes to identify themselves and inspire other walkers. Some walkers wore costumes and turned heads. In a welcome speech, Dr Vinod Joshi, the founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, paid tribute to mouth cancer survivors and their carers and the importance of mouth cancer awareness. He also thanked the fundraisers who had made the Walk possible. After a short warming up exercise by a professional fitness instructor, Dr Joshi sounded the air horn and set off the Walk. The swarm of walkers through the park provided an alternative attraction to the ducks, dogs and roller skaters for the public who were enjoying the lovely sunny autumn day in the park. It was a fun walk and some walkers took the opportunity to visit the Princess Diana memorial. Many photographs were taken. At the end of the scenic walk, all walkers were rewarded with goodie bags filled with freebies and a well-deserved medal. The event was jointly sponsored by Biotene and Philips Sonicare as well as supported by various other organizations.

The World Health Organization also lent its support to the Mouth Cancer Foundation's 10K walking event. Dr. P.E Petersen of the Oral Health Programme, Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion said, "Mouth Cancer Awareness Week is a very important initiative and the 10K sponsored walking event is a great way to raise the profile of Mouth Cancer. The prevention of oral cancer is a priority action area of the World Health Organisation/Oral Health Programme. I look forward to expanding the collaboration between the Mouth Cancer Foundation and the World Health Organisation/Oral Health Programme for effective control and prevention of oral cancer in the future".

Founder of the Mouth Cancer Foundation, Dr Vinod Joshi, said "Hundreds of walkers turned up to walk the talk in Hyde Park London despite terrible weather predictions but it turned out to be a fantastic sunny clear day with a beautiful blue sky. I won't say what I paid for that! The Walk has taken the mouth cancer awareness message to the public in a fun way. Everyone remarked on how well organized and enjoyable it was. We are all looking forward to next year's Mouth Cancer Walk!"

Photos of the Mouth Cancer Walk can be seen at www.mouthcancerwalk.org/photos

Plans for the 2nd Mouth Cancer Walk in 2007 are already in place and registrations will be opening in the New Year.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Mouth Cancer Foundation is a registered charity no. 1109298

Mouth cancer refers to the cancers that can occur in any part of the mouth, tongue, lips, throat, salivary glands, pharynx, larynx, sinus, and other sites located in the head and neck area.

Mouth cancers have a higher proportion of deaths per number of cases than breast cancer, cervical cancer or skin melanoma.

Worldwide an estimated 405,000 new cases of oral cancer (oral cavity and pharynx excluding nasopharynx) are diagnosed each year with two-thirds of these cases occur in developing countries. Each year an estimated 66,650 new oral cancer cases are diagnosed in the countries of the **European Union**. Rising trends of oral cancer in young and middle-aged men, particularly of cancer of the tongue, have been reported in other European countries and the USA.

In the UK, there has been a 27% increase in cases from 3,673 in 1995 to 4,660 in 2003. Since 1989, the rate has steadily increased to reach 9.8 per 100,000 in 2003, an average increase of 2.2% each year since 1989. While female oral cancer rates have remained significantly lower than male rates, their incidence trends have been similar with an average increase of 2.5% each year since 1989. However, there have been large increases in the incidence of oral cancer diagnosed in men in their 40s and 50s whose rates have doubled from 3.6 to 8.8 per 100,000 for men aged 40-49 and from 11.5 to 24.9 for men aged 50-59. The mortality rate from mouth cancer is just over 50% due to late detection. Despite treatment, there were 1,679 deaths in 2004 – that's approximately one death every 5 hours. The chances of survival are much improved if the cancer is detected early and rapidly treated but most mouth cancers present at a late stage. This increase in a cancer that is often difficult to treat and often leaves survivors debilitated and disfigured, is alarming.

Mouth cancer incidence is strongly related to social and economic deprivation, with the highest rates occurring in the most disadvantaged sections of the population. This reflects the higher tobacco consumption in the more disadvantaged groups. The mouth cancer incidence rates in Scotland are significantly higher than in other parts of the UK. This result correlates with the higher rates of tobacco and alcohol consumption in Scotland than in other parts of the UK. Studies of oral cancer incidence in minority ethnic populations in Britain have reported high rates in south Asian and Chinese populations in which the habit of areca nut or betel quid chewing is still prevalent.

Mouth Cancer Awareness Week, held in November each year, is co-ordinated by the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF), supported by a wide range of leading national health organisations. These include the Mouth Cancer Foundation, Cancer Research UK, Denplan, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), British Dental Association (BDA), British Association of Head and Neck Oncologists (BAHNO), British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (BAOMS), the health departments of the four UK countries, GKT, Pharmacy Health Link, QUIT and Scope.

More information about the Walk is available

at the Mouth Cancer Walk web site www.mouthcancerwalk.org

or by emailing info@mouthcancerwalk.org

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Sponsors

The Free Mouth Cancer Foundation Sponsored Walking event was sponsored by

Philips Sonicare. www.sonicare.co.uk



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- while being as gentle as a manual toothbrush
- Improved gum health**
- Naturally whiter teeth

* Compared to manual toothbrush

** Knudsen/Donnellan, 1998, US



The event is also being sponsored by Biotène. www.biotene.com

Biotène's range of oral care products has been designed to help reduce the symptoms of Dry Mouth resulting from the use of strong medications and cancer treatments. Biotène's natural antibacterial enzyme system helps promote healing of sore and tender mouth tissues, bleeding gums, gingivitis and inhibits the growth of harmful odour-causing bacteria. The gentle formulations provide long lasting moisture essential for oral comfort.