

Press release: Hyperemesis Gravidarum Press Release

Distribution: National Health and medical writers

Distribution date: to be confirmed

CAMPAIGN SETS UP NETWORK FOR SEVERE PREGNANCY SICKNESS

A campaign being driven by a pregnancy sickness support group is aiming to raise the awareness of a condition called Hyperemesis Gravidarum amongst GPs and sufferers.

Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) is an extreme form of sickness that affects women during pregnancy. Constant vomiting and nausea can force sufferers to be admitted to hospital and can be fatal without treatment.

Pregnancy Sickness Support want to raise the levels of knowledge amongst GPs and the general public with the hope of expanding newly created local and national networks offering a backbone of support and advice to mothers suffering from this condition as well as a place of referral for GPs and other health professionals.

Regional organiser Caitlin Dean from Cornwall, who is a nurse and former HG sufferer said:

“There’s a staggering amount of ignorance surrounding HG not just amongst the general public but within the medical profession. Many women are told what they are experiencing is normal or to “pull themselves together” and that’s simply unacceptable.

“We are putting a system in place where pregnant women only need to send a text message to ask for help or reassurance from other local sufferers who know how they feel or to put them in touch with the group’s HG medical experts.”

Pregnancy Sickness Support also offers GPs with a professional point of referral for HG patients as well as up to date information on treatments from its volunteer team of doctors, nurses and midwives.

Dr Catherine Sykes, a Trustee of Pregnancy Sickness Support said: “Pregnancy Sickness Support offers moral support, medical advice as well as advocacy, in that our experts can talk to a GP on your behalf.”

“The level of HG training is currently low in the UK compared to other countries even amongst midwives. In Canada for example safe and tested anti-nausea medication is licensed but these

are yet to be adopted in this county. However, there still no cure for HG, which is why support is so vital.”

One in a 150 pregnant mothers who suffer from morning sickness suffer from Hyperemesis Gravidarum. That still equates to quite a large number of women being affected by the sickness, with many HG sufferers forced to terminate the pregnancy and a small number developing serious complications.

The Pregnancy Sickness Support network is up and running in the Midlands and a newly formed Southwest group but is looking for volunteers to start groups around the UK and increase its network. For more information please get in contact with Caitlin Dean on xxxxxx.

Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) Case Study:

Jane Pratt

Jane Suffered 6 times with HG and lived in hope that each one would be different but couldn't let it stop her having the children that she wanted.

“Life stops when you have HG. It made me feel like jumping out of the bedroom window”

Jane wishes there had been a support network available for her pregnancies and wants doctors to realise how important their attitude is to the woman's experience.

“having a sympathetic doctor makes all the difference. Luckily my doctor really got to know me and took an interest in my condition”

Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG) Case Study:

Caitlin Dean, Cornwall

Caitlin suffered from HG with both her pregnancies and says that having Hyperemesis Gravidarum completely changed her as a person.

“In my normal life I am a busy and active person, so to not even be able to get up and walk around is awful and left me feeling very isolated. Just walking down stairs could trigger 30 minutes of continuous vomiting”

Caitlin is now planning for her third pregnancy and hopes for the support network to be active by this time.

“For some women the only time they are able to keep any fluids down is if they lie in a dark hospital room to reduce sensory stimulation but this can be very isolating. The support network will mean a former sufferer can provide care through a visit or even by sending a text message offering comfort.”

-ends-

For more information please go pregnancysicknesssupport.org.uk

Nausea & vomiting in pregnancy (NVP) facts and figures

- Nausea & vomiting in pregnancy (NVP) is very common, on average it affects 70% of pregnant women to a greater or lesser extent.
- About 45% of pregnant women suffer from nausea with vomiting while an additional 25% suffer with nausea only.
- 85% of women have two episodes of nausea per day and 55% have three or more episodes per day.
- Eating actually reduces the nausea of NVP in 50% of women.
- 30% of pregnant women in paid employment need time off work due to NVP.
- One in 150 pregnant women will need to be admitted to hospital because they have “hyperemesis gravidarum” (severe pregnancy sickness).

Pregnancy Sickness Support Trustees

Dr Roger Gadsby (Chairman) is a GP in Nuneaton and also works for three sessions a week as Senior Lecturer in Primary Care at the University of Warwick. He has had an interest in pregnancy sickness symptoms since he joined the same practice as Dr Tony Barnie-Adshead in 1979. Together they have carried out research and published papers and articles on pregnancy sickness symptoms.

Dr Tony Barnie-Adshead is a retired GP in Nuneaton. He has shared research into various aspects of pregnancy sickness since the mid 1960's. His interest started when a lady with severe symptoms said that it had been such a bad experience that she didn't want to contemplate having another pregnancy and didn't medical science know what was causing it? He has spent the last 35 years researching the answer to that question.

Dr Brian Swallow is a Chartered Health Psychologist and a qualified Social Worker. Until his retirement he taught mental health and clinical psychology at University, and prior to that was the Director of North Humberside Mind. Since the time his wife suffered from hyperemesis gravidarum eighteen years ago he has been undertaking research to identify the causes and effects of NVP. His research findings have been published in a number of scientific journals.

Ms Caroline Pratt is the daughter of Dr Tony Barnie-Adshead. She suffered from hyperemesis gravidarum (severe pregnancy sickness) and was lucky to benefit from the knowledge of her father. She says "It is difficult for people who don't suffer to understand how unpleasant it can be. I think that the work of this charity is important as it is providing support and information for sufferers and carers".

Mrs Liz Hammond is a midwife who worked for twelve years in Nuneaton. She has two young children and suffered with pregnancy sickness in both pregnancies.