

Dear members of Ramsey Golf and Bowls Club,

I would like to thank you for nominating the Lymphoedema Research Fund at St George's Hospital Charity to be your charity of the year. We are hugely appreciative of your generosity and support at this crucial time for Lymphoedema research.

A lot of people ask me: what is lymphoedema and why does it matter?

If the blood circulation supplies oxygen, nutrients, and water to the body's tissues then the lymphatic system acts as the returning, cleansing, and recycling circulation.

Lymphoedema is a disease that occurs when the lymphatic system fails. It presents with fluid swelling and a predisposition to infection. These infections can lead to sepsis and be life threatening.

Lymphoedema swelling most commonly presents as swollen ankles for no obvious reason. You may know of friends or family who suffer ankle swelling in the heat or following a plane flight. This is a mild form of lymphoedema. Lymphoedema often occurs for no obvious reason such as when lymph glands are removed for cancer treatment or when someone is bitten by a mosquito.

Lymphoedema can occur in children for genetic reasons. At St George's we have discovered 9 of the 15 genes known to cause lymphoedema. Knowing the genetic basis helps explain how a disease occurs and provides the opportunity for developing new treatments.

Raising funds for research is difficult for a disease such as lymphoedema that nobody knows about.

It is estimated that cases exceed 250 million worldwide, yet surprisingly, not many people have ever heard of Lymphoedema and even fewer could tell you what it is.

The Lymphoedema Research Fund at St George's Hospital Charity was established to provide funding for lymphoedema research so that we can increase our knowledge and awareness of this disabling disease.

You have helped enormously by supporting our cause, but you can also help by spreading the word about lymphoedema.

Thank you once again,

Professor Peter Mortimer

Consultant Dermatologist at St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust