

Sir Alex Ferguson wants to **BE THE CHANGE**



Sir Alex Ferguson is calling for Government and public funding to develop a new style of cancer treatment that kills cancers with a single treatment and without the side effects associated with chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The football legend whose parents both died of cancer a year apart, says that the public has a right to have Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) urgently developed to treat a range of cancers.

Currently, in the UK PDT is only available for skin, head and neck, mouth, lung and oesophageal cancers. Experimentally it is being developed for brain, pancreatic, bile duct, vulval, penile and prostate cancers.

"My Father was 66 when he died and my Mother was 64. My Father was 47 when he got bowel cancer and had to have a colostomy.

"We lived in Govan in Glasgow. We had no bathroom in those days and just had a metal sink for washing yourself. When my career as a footballer started to take off we managed to get them into a nice apartment flat – it was 20 floors up and a bit of the climb if the lifts weren't working!

"When my Dad retired, one week later the cancer came back in his lungs and he died a year later. My mother was a smoker all her life and anyone who does that runs the risk of cancer at some point. She got lung cancer and she died a year after my Dad.

"Those are my experiences, and I have many friends who have died from cancer. It is one of those diseases that everyone prays we will find an answer for. I wish PDT had been there 30 odd years ago. It could have given my Mother and Father a chance and a choice of what they went through."

PDT kills cancer cells through a combination of drug and light, which starves the cancer of oxygen allowing the body to heal and create new, healthy cells. Despite being approved by the NHS for the treatment of some cancers, fewer than 300 of the 300,000 patients diagnosed with cancer killers received it last year.

The treatment has the ability to destroy cancers usually with a single 20-minute session, avoiding the need for invasive surgery and the traumatic effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

It is also cost-effective. The cost of the drug used in treating skin cancer, for example, is just £235, an enormous saving when compared to all other treatments, including drug therapies, offered by the NHS.

The campaign's target is to have PDT treatments approved and available on the NHS for half of all cancer patients within three years.

Continues Sir Alex: "I think it's fantastic what PDT can do. This campaign is really important and recognition is the hardest thing to achieve. That is why on TV in every advert you have insurance companies banging out their messages. You have Coca-Cola banging out their messages. You have big companies banging out their messages time after time talking about their products.

"PDT and cancer is a different thing altogether. We are out to save people's lives. That message has to be stronger. That's why I am supporting the KILLING Cancer campaign to raise funds for PDT research and to get more treatment centres set up around the country to offer the treatments.

"That's why Sir David Frost, Walter Smith, Alan Curbishley, Sam Allardyce, Chris Tarrant – all important people who recognise that something has to be done about getting the recognition for PDT. We have to get the message out and recognition of PDT into people's homes - and the messages from people who have had PDT for their cancers. We have to get that message out to people in Government and the NHS who can do something about it."

Sir Alex says that cancer is his biggest worry in life. "I think that any cancer at my age would be a terrible risk to me. That is why I go to the Doctor each year for tests to see if there are any early signs of cancer.

"Over many years I have spoken to patients with cancer who are having chemotherapy and radiotherapy. They have their real, real bad days and it really brings them down. I think it is the fear of the treatment more than the cancer itself that is their biggest worry and they go through all that pain.

"And of course you will do that because if it saves your life, then it's worth it. If there was another way and that way is PDT, we must make them aware of it. We must try it. We must go through with the research and make people aware so they have a choice. If they want to go to a doctor who is going to operate, remove their organs to save their lives and then go through with the radiotherapy or the chemotherapy, then it's a choice.

"But if there is another choice that debars all these pains and surgery we must look at it. This is why PDT must be given a voice and a platform so people can make a choice. It's as simple as that.

"PDT is only one 20-minute treatment session and you are injected with the drug and then they use the light. I find it fascinating that perhaps in a 20-minute period with 200-seconds of light to kill the cancer cells - that surely has to be the first route you would take in treating cancer. Then you have the choice of the chemotherapy, radiotherapy and the surgery if it doesn't work.

"I'm listening to Alex Ferguson talking to himself. Which should be the first thing you do? The first thing is you must try is PDT. It the simple solution before you try anything else. There is nothing to be lost from doing that.

"I am one of many people who are campaigning and urging the medical world to recognise the PDT treatment for cancer. This is an important issue which will save many lives, and I urge everyone to look at the information on the charity's website."

www.killingcancer.co.uk