

Thyroid UK 2017 Conference Report



We are very pleased to say that our 2017 conference was a huge success!

During my introduction, I informed everyone about our #T3Campaign and how it was going. Everyone was given a free #T3Campaign car sticker and we hope that everyone placed it somewhere it could be seen.

The day started very early for some of our volunteers, especially Louise and Charlotte so that they could get everything ready.

We were extremely pleased with the venue although, really, we could have paid for a larger room as it was a little cramped. The area outside the conference room was where delegates could choose their refreshments – there was tea, coffee and pastries with a selection of gluten free food such as fruit and various nuts available at registration and at the refreshment breaks throughout the day.

Our keynote speaker, Dr Sam Rodgers, MBBS, MRCGP, Medical Director, Medichecks spoke about The Importance of Thorough Testing and Interpretation with equal amounts of seriousness and humour.

He told us that over the years he had a “slow dawning realisation” that levothyroxine wasn’t right for everyone and he came to see first-hand, the difficulties for doctors who want to prescribe NDT.

He went on to discuss the process of how thyroid hormone is made and which tests are important for patients including iron and vitamin D.





There was a change in the order of the talks because Dr Alyssa Burns-Hill was not feeling very well in the morning so our second speaker was Melissa Cohen, Nutritional Therapist Bsc (Hons), who spoke about Gluten Intolerance and Autoimmune Thyroiditis: the links.

Melissa explained that many people think about what they don't have in their body but should have i.e. deficiencies of vitamins and minerals and thyroid levels. What they don't think about though is what they have in their bodies that they shouldn't have such as unwanted bacteria and how this unbalances the body.

Dr Patrick Gwyer, Chartered Psychologist was our next speaker who explained all about how to have A Mindful Approach to Mental Health and Thyroid.

He first explained what a clinical psychologist is and what they do – finding out what people are doing that is helpful and unhelpful and working out how to increase the helpful and decrease the unhelpful.



He then went on to explain what mindfulness was and how it helps people but only if they find a way to do it that they enjoy. There's no point in trying to do something you don't enjoy because you won't keep it up and it won't help you in the long run.

Lunch was served in the hotel restaurant and there was so much to choose from with a gluten free area set apart from the rest of the choices. Feedback about the food was very positive!

During the lunch break, people could wander around the stalls where they could chat to people from Blue Horizon, Coeliac UK, Medicecks and The Graham Hughes International Charity for Hughes (Antiphospholipid) Syndrome – (GHIC). They could also buy goods and books from the Thyroid UK stall.

Dr Sam Rodgers ran out of time to explain about hyperthyroidism so he very kindly held an informal session in the lunch break to speak to delegates.



After lunch, Dr Alyssa Burns-Hill, PhD, MSc, FRSPH, MIHPE, Hormone & Holistic Health Specialist, talked about the stress connection.

She explained that many people don't realise that chronic ill health is a stressor to the body and that hormone health is very important in this. She cited three case studies where she helped patients and their outcomes which were truly amazing.

Our last speaker was Lisa Francesca Nand, Journalist and film-maker and patron of Thyroid UK. She told her story of how she became hypothyroid and how it affected her fertility. It was, at times, a very sad story especially when she showed the trailer of her documentary about her miscarriages and her treatment for fertility. Many delegates, including myself became very emotional.



However, it had a very happy ending as she was able to have two lovely little boys. She now wants to spread the word about how Hashimoto's can affect fertility, even with normal thyroid test results – something that may not affect you but it may affect your children and your children's children.

A raffle was called at the end of the last break. We learnt from our last conference and only had a small raffle this time but the four people who won were extremely pleased!



At the end of the conference, there was a question and answer session, with one particular speaker receiving lots of queries about 5HTP. This tells us that we need to write some information about this topic!

After the conference ended, many delegates found me to tell me what an excellent day they had had which was very humbling for me.

We asked everyone to complete an evaluation form and hand it in and we are pleased to say that 52% of people handed their form in, which is a really good percentage.

We have analysed the results of the feedback which has shown us that we need to make some changes for the next conference.

Dr Sam Rodgers, Dr Alyssa Burns-Hill and Melissa Cohen were the top three rated talks and the feedback included comments such as, “Dr Sam Rodgers was so enlightening. I could have listened to him all day.” and “Dr Alyssa Burns-Hill was excellent.”.

Overall, in respect of the conference, the respondents to the evaluation form were very happy but a lot of people felt that the speakers didn't have enough time to talk and that there was too much time for breaks. Only one person said that they wouldn't attend a Thyroid UK conference again, which is fantastic!

The most important point coming out of the evaluation was the comments about what delegates are going to do now.

Delegates said that they were now going to:

- Take control of their own health
- Take information to their GP
- Go or stay gluten free
- Check their vitamin and mineral status
- Get more testing done – thyroid and adrenal
- Consider doing mindfulness/stress relief

We asked delegates questions at the end of the evaluation form about whether their knowledge had improved after the conference and I am very pleased to say that in most cases, they answered yes, particularly in regard to their knowledge of the effects of stress and gluten intolerance.

Many delegates felt they had more confidence in discussing the information they had with their doctor and felt more empowered to ask their doctor for relevant tests to be done.

About 86% of the respondents felt that they had gained enough information to make informed decisions about their thyroid health and about 82% felt that the information gained from attending our conference would lead to an improvement in their professional and/or family life which is very heartening for Thyroid UK.

Because of the positive outcomes of our conference we will definitely be holding another one hopefully within the next couple of years and we are planning smaller seminars across the country so that we can reach people who couldn't come to our conference due to either cost or because the venue was too far away for them.

You can see all of the lovely photographs taken on the day by Sabera Bahm by going to:

Photo [Gallery 1](#) and Photo [Gallery 2](#)

If you would like online access to the PDF versions of the PowerPoint presentations, transcript and videos we are asking for a donation of £5.00.

If you would prefer paper copies of the transcript and PDF versions of the PowerPoint presentations, the cost is £5.00 plus p&p.

We also have a Thyroid UK branded USB stick which includes all the videos. The cost of this is £7.00 plus p&p.

All of these options are available via Paypal in our shop which you can access [here](#)

For alternative payment methods, please email Louise on louise.roberts@thyroiduk.org

Once you have made payment you will be emailed a link to access everything.

The presentations are very interesting and informative and we hope you enjoy them.