Jade Goody and Cancer – the Story Behind the Trauma

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Jade Goody's Life in the Public Eye

Was it a dream wedding or mocking exploitation of the media? Whatever your opinion of Jade Goody, the reality TV star insisted that she lived her final months in the public spotlight to secure the future of her two young boys.

Jade Goody, the 27-year-old TV star, who suffered from terminal cervical cancer, has had a tricky relationship with the media although she has been praised for her bravery in publicly championing cancer charities and earning as much as possible in order for her to pay for her young sons’ education. This is something that Jade Goody believed would have made a difference to her own life.

Jade was brought up in a run-down part of Bermondsey, south-east London, by her mother Jackie Budden. However, her father Andrew Goody (who spent time in prison) had left the family when Jade was only two years old. At the age of 42, Jade’s father died of a drugs overdose.

In 2002, Jade first came to public attention as a contestant on Big Brother 3. Throughout the show Jade was ridiculed by the media for her lack of general knowledge. Luckily, Jade succeeded in turning everything around and in the end came fourth in the show. Ever since then, Jade had hardly been out of the public eye.

Jade was joined by Jack Tweed and her mum Jackie to enter Celebrity Big Brother in January 2007. This was a huge turning point and was thought to be the end of Jade's career following allegations of racism and bullying towards Bollywood actress- Shilpa Shetty. The TV show prompted 45,000 complaints to media regulator Ofcom.

In August 2008, Jade entered Big Boss, India's Big Brother, which was hosted by Shilpa Shetty. It was during her stay in the house that Jade received a phone call, and was told she had been diagnosed with cervical cancer. She immediately left the show and returned home for treatment but has been told her cancer is terminal.

On 13th February 2009, Jade was told by doctors that she only had months to live. Jack then proposed to her at her bedside in hospital. After lots of
rushed preparations, on Sunday 22 February Jade married current partner Jack Tweed in her 'dream' ceremony, the couple spent what could be their only night together as a married couple when Jack's curfew was lifted. Jade said to a pal, "I will be watching my boys from heaven. I've told my family I will be the brightest star." Jack was released early on licence last month after being sentenced to attacking a 16-year-old boy with a golf club.

After a long struggle against terminal cervical cancer, she unfortunately passed away in her sleep at 3:15 in the morning on Sunday, 22^nd^ March 2009. That day meant a lot to her family, especially her boys, as that Sunday was Mother’s Day.

Jade Goody has shown remarkable courage and faced the end of her life with her typical openness. Ever since she entered the world of stars, Jade has been happy to share her life with us, through reality shows and interviews.

**Jade Goody Inspires Women to take Tests**

Initially, Jade ignored the call for a follow up test for cervical cancer. Although she was warned that the tumour would spread until professional doctors treated it, she claimed that she was ‘too scared to receive news’. Soon enough, Jade began to feel the effects of the symptoms of her cancer. She immediately went to her local GP and he told her that her tumour had spread to her bowel and other vital organs. A few months later, and her cancer is terminal and she is fighting for her life.

With this tragic story, Jade has inspired women all over the country to go for smear tests, and taught them not to ignore follow up calls. Jade quoted, ‘I made a mistake, and I don’t want other people to make the same mistake as me. Going for a follow up test after I felt the cancer taking effect was worth it’.

Newspapers, the Sun in particular, have publicised stories of ordinary women that have been inspired by Jade. One of these people is Michelle Holt, 22, from Lancashire. She said; ‘My screening results also came back abnormal, but before I heard Jade’s story I was afraid to answer it. When the story of Jade’s terminal illness went public, I immediately went to my doctor. Fortunately the screening came back clear, but if it had been something, I’m glad that I didn’t leave it too late’.
How Cancer Affects Families

One in three of us will be diagnosed with cancer during our life, and one in four will die from it. That is around 126,000 deaths per year.

Cancer does not only affect people who have been diagnosed with it, but also their relatives and friends. Cancer is tough on everyone; people watching their relatives suffering in a lot of pain and slowly dying; watching them go through chemotherapy or radiotherapy, hoping that they will survive, but that is not always the case. In the UK, cancer is responsible for 126,000 deaths per year.

There are many types of cancer, but the most common in the U.K. are:
- Breast cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Lung cancer

When a person has been diagnosed with cancer, their families usually give up most of their free time to help them. Here is an interview with Marina Lucci, age 40, whose uncle died of a malignant brain tumour in November 2006, only in his late fifties.

Marina: “His family looked after him at home in the final days. As his condition worsened and he was unable to climb stairs, he was given a hospital bed so it was easier for him. It was a distressing time, and when he died I felt very sad as it was painful to watch somebody you love dying. He was still relatively young and had always been healthy, but he did smoke, and maybe this was a contributing factor to his illness.”

When a person is ill, each member of their family goes through a range of emotions. They worry for their dying relative and want to spend every minute they have left with them. For the older children in the family they may have to look after younger siblings, do the house-work, cook and clean. Unfortunately, if a parent’s cancer is terminal, and they do not have any other parental figure to care for them, they may have to go to a foster home, or live with a relative.
The Cervical Cancer Vaccination

In September of 2008, the HPV vaccination was introduced into secondary schools across the country for girls aged twelve to thirteen. The injection protects girls against HPV, which causes cervical cancer. It is given as three separate injections over a period of time.

HPV stands for Human Papillomavirus; it is a virus that can lead to cervical cancer. There are over a hundred types of HPV and thirteen of those can cause cervical cancer. The vaccine protects against the two strands of the virus that cause 70% of cervical cancer in women.

Cristina, a 13 year old girl who had the jab, said, ‘I discussed the option of the jab with my parents and I was happy with the decision. The jab was worth it, and I recommend it to girls in younger years.’

Jessica, a girl who chose not to have the jab, quoted, ‘I only had a small say in it, but I was happy with my parent’s decision. The advertisements did not make me feel pressured as I knew it was my decision in the end.’

Many parents have felt like the advertising campaign was implying that if parents chose not to allow their daughter to have the injection they weren’t protecting her. But that is not the case, it is purely the parents’ decision because they are doing what they think is best. Many girls who have had the jab told us that they feel safer now that it has been administered, yet they weren’t really worried before.

In addition to this, we interviewed Madelaine, 18, who missed out on the jab. She said, ‘I was aware of the jab but upset that it was only for Year 8 girls. However, I have had a letter about a catch up jab.’

The cervical cancer jab, prompted by the Jade Goody story, helps to promote the awareness of cancer in schools and other public areas.
Cancer in Men

Cancer is as frequent in men as it is in women but recently many people are only focusing on women’s cancer over men’s. Rather, the profile of men’s cancer should be raised to increase knowledge of this very important issue. Orchid, a men’s cancer charity, state that “37,000 men will be diagnosed with a male-specific cancer in 2009”. Men get cancer just as frequently as women and so we need to take action against it, by raising the awareness in men and women.

Types of Cancers in Men

Do you know that it is prostate cancer awareness month? Only 1/5 people would be able to answer yes to this question, a survey has proved. 10,000 men die of prostate cancer a year as it is the second most male specific cancer in the UK. Evidently there is something wrong, and action needs to be taken or the problem could escalate.

We interviewed a member of staff at our school and asked her what she thought about the issue, she said: “The profile of men’s cancer has got better in recent years but still needs to be increased if this problem is to stop. Jade Goody did not necessarily raise the profile for men’s cancer.”

Only 30% of people in doctor’s waiting rooms are men and researchers found that men experiencing chest pain would ignore it. They also found that men with partners might go to their doctor, after receiving advice from their partner to do so. To try to change what men think about cancer is to target their mothers, wives, sister’s, to convince the men to go and be tested.