

## About the 2021 Conference.....My view:

by Cindy Hill-Rennie.

I just had a wonderful weekend away, compliments of the Ostomy Society. It felt like work though.

My family kept asking me "what did You learn?". This is what I learnt.

- There are some very caring Surgeons out there, doing a wonderful job, sharing their knowledge, and having great empathy for Ostomates.
- Tuariki Delamere, an MP, has a Urostomy. He's the same age as my husband who has one, and for the same reason: bladder cancer. He spoke to me and others about some of his experiences when Minister for Immigration. He's very brave, as he showed a video of changing his urostomy bag. He's funny too, and honest, and not hiding his ostomy and it's challenges.
- Fared Ahmed is a real nice person. His wife was killed in the Shooting at the Christchurch Mosque. He's so compassionate. He's funny too. He's a great natural, relaxed speaker. Very easy to listen to. He's changed my point of view. He's answered questions I had about his religion.
- Appliance company Representatives try to help Ostomates, but it's still up to your Stoma nurse to approve any supplies you might like to change to permanently. They have so many other products available, that I've never seen before. At a conference you have to make time to go and see them, but they all seem willing to listen and show their supplies.
- Often Caterers providing gluten free food, ruin by putting whole corn in the savoury, poppy seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and not carefully naming exactly which plate is gluten free. Luckily I stopped a gluten free person gulping down a bun, when it was only the soup that was gluten free.
- Smoking is the major cause of Bowel Cancer, and it's more prevalent than breast cancer and other cancers. (Well I think that's what I heard).
- During a breakout group for Ileostomies I learnt that Vitamin B12 is only absorbable in the last part of the small intestine, so if it was used in the operation as in cut out, you cannot absorb Vitamin B12. You need a jab from your Doctor. Hydration is very important for Ileostomates, but you have to add potassium and sodium to it. A urine test of potassium and sodium levels will tell your doctor if you do not have the right balance. Just water is not good enough, you just end up washing all your minerals out. Psyllium

Husk (Konsyl D) is good to slow down the digestion, as is Loperimide. It was suggested that Bananas with Salt on, is a way of getting some potassium and sodium into the system. I since tried Banana fritters with salt. It was excellent.

- You should be seeing a stoma nurse every 2 years who should look at your nude stoma, not through the peep whole of the affixed bag if you would like it checked.
- Stoma nurses still think it's a good idea to use removable wipes and barrier wipes. I don't, as I'm highly allergic to them. Water and Aqueous cream is all I use.
- Kallia Patching spoke about social media. Although there is the Ostomy Website, and the OstomatesNZ facebook group, apparently young people use other forms of contacts with their phones and possibly don't even know about the website and the facebook group. Things like Twitter, Instagram, and blogs and ipods and things.
- Richard is still trying to raise enough money for Ronaldo's new wheelchair. You can donate by going to a website called Give a little page, then type in Ronaldo Lora. And Richard is really keen on organising the 2023 conference, which is to be held in Rotorua.
- "Facing the Challenges" was the theme for the Conference, and so that included people who experienced huge challenges of a different kind like Cam McLeay who went in search of the source of the Nile. Grant Broadhurst who spoke of his trek on the Kokoda Track Papua New Guinea.
- Participants at Ostomy Conferences are all such nice people. Every conversation with any one of them was heart-warming. Every Ostomate has gone through a great deal of challenges and look, we survived.
- The MC David McCall from Gisborne was great at doing that job.
- The President of the Ostomy Federation Jill Newton is ill and retired and so was not there.
- Driving Miss Daisy started in Havelock North and has 75 plus franchises and 250 vehicles. The Director Malanie Harper wants the service in every town of New Zealand. So if you need a ride ring 0800 768 842. Or visit the website [www.drivingmissdaisy.co.nz](http://www.drivingmissdaisy.co.nz)
- Havelock North is a lovely little town. The Shamrock and Rose is a nice little pub, where I had dinner with Les and Dian. There are gardens and galleries I have yet to explore.