

Invitation

Many of you only come occasionally to the Group's monthly meeting but you still enjoy receiving and reading the newsletter.

We'd like to invite you (and your partner) to our December Meeting and Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 10 December 2014.

The lunch will be held at the Ivanhoe Hotel Bistro, a short walk across the car park from the Uniting Church Hall. Seniors' meals are available. Details of the menu are available at <http://ivanhoehotel.com.au/bar-bistro/summer-menu-2/>

We hope that you'll join us for this special social occasion. Please RSVP to prostateheidelberg@gmail.com

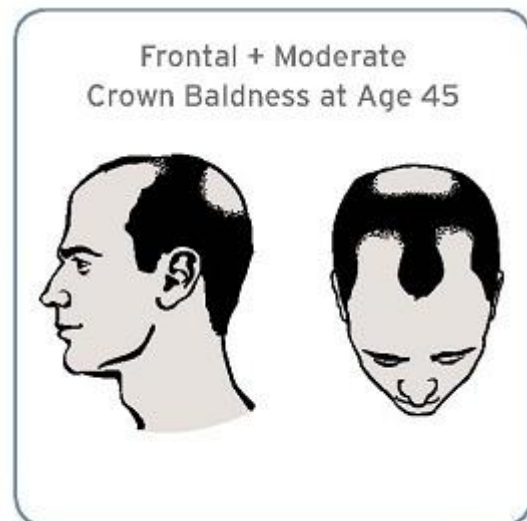
Baldness and Prostate Cancer

A recent study published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology found that men who had moderate baldness in the front and crown of the head ("male pattern baldness") at age 45 had up to a 40% increased risk of developing aggressive prostate cancer compared with men who had no baldness. Other types of baldness patterns were not linked to increased prostate cancer risk.

The men in the study received a questionnaire that asked them to recall what their hair-loss patterns were at age 45 using a pictorial tool. More studies, including a more reliable method of assessing male pattern baldness, will be necessary before we can routinely consider baldness in prostate cancer screening recommendations.

Dihydrotestosterone (DHT) is associated with prostate cancer progression and has also been

linked to male pattern baldness, as these men have higher circulating levels of this androgen. Hereditary genetic factors may also be involved.



Our Next Meeting

Date: **Wednesday 12 November 2014.**

Time: **10:00 am to 12.30 pm,**

Place: **Ivanhoe Uniting Church, Seddon Street, Ivanhoe** (Melways 31 F8)

- Meetings are open to anyone interested in getting support or information on a prostate cancer journey.
- Partners or carers are welcome to all meetings
- **There is no charge for attending.**

“Copy to Patient”

Just about every book I’ve read on prostate cancer recommends that you should keep a treatment record. In its simplest form, your treatment record is just a diary comprising a date, what happened, symptoms, test results and reminders to yourself about what you need to do.

Recently keeping my treatment record has become much easier since I’ve learnt that the pathology companies will send a copy of your pathology results directly to you.

It’s recommended that you always use the same pathology company for your tests. The equipment used by the different companies can be different and can produce different results. Using the same company each time means that you’re comparing apples with apples.

I get my blood tests done by Melbourne Pathology. They will send a copy of the results directly to you if you ask the nurse for this when you are having the blood taken. The nurse will get you to fill out a legal request form. If you write on the form “Results by email please” and write your email address (instead of your postal address) in the address section of the form, Melbourne Pathology will email the results to you. Otherwise they will post them to you.

I keep records of all my tests on my computer. Previously I had to get my doctor to print a copy of the test results and then had to scan them onto the computer. It’s marvellous now getting a pdf file of the results before my appointment with the doctor. I can compare the test results with my previous test results. It enables me to work out whether I have any questions about the test results before I see the doctor. If all the results aren’t sent through, I’m able to make sure that any missing results are sent to me and my doctor before my appointment.

Apart from Melbourne Pathology, the other Victorian pathology laboratories won’t send

out copies of your test results by email. The other Victorian pathology laboratories will post copies of your test results to you if, when your doctor is ordering the pathology tests, he or she writes on the pathology request form “Copy to Patient”. Some Victorian pathology laboratories will post the copy of the test results to you at the same time as they send it to your doctor. Other companies will only post the copy of the test results to you after they have sent it to your doctor.

If you have your pathology results sent directly to you, make sure that you have your doctor interpret your results. Results of pathology tests are rarely straightforward, and abnormal results (and many normal ones) require interpretation by a health care professional.

Whilst patients have every right to see their test results, this access should always be incorporated into a healthy doctor-patient relationship with open and respectful two-way communication.

Getting your pathology results sent directly to you isn’t for everybody. If you don’t feel comfortable enough with a computer, or if the idea of accessing your test results before your doctor has reviewed them doesn’t appeal to you, it may be better to wait until your next doctor’s appointment to get the results.

Active Surveillance

Following a successful initiative by the Michigan Urological Surgery Improvement Collaborative promoting active surveillance to Michigan urologists, 50% of newly diagnosed patients with low-risk forms of prostate cancer in Michigan are now receiving initial management on active surveillance. This is an enormous change compared with historical rates of management on active surveillance of between 4% and 20%.

In Victoria 15%* of newly diagnosed patients receive initial management on active surveillance. * based on data from the Victorian Prostate Cancer Registry for the period 2008-12.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this newsletter is not intended to take the place of medical advice. You should obtain advice from your doctor relevant to your specific situation before acting or relying on anything in this newsletter. We have no liability whatsoever to you in connection with this newsletter.

Getting Your Affairs in Order

It's a good idea for everyone to get their affairs in order, whether you have cancer or not. By preparing a few simple documents, you can make sure that your wishes are followed, and you will make things easier for your family at a difficult time.

Advance care planning can help people close to you and those caring for you know what is important to you about medical treatment and what care you would want if you are unable to participate in these discussions.

In Victoria the components of an advance care plan are:

Enduring Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment) - to appoint a substitute decision maker

Advance Care Plan / Advance Care Directive / Statement of choices - to document your wishes to inform your substitute decision maker and doctor to assist them in making decisions for you.

Refusal of Treatment Certificate - to legally refuse treatment generally or of a particular kind for a current condition

The Advance Care Planning Australia website (<http://advancecareplanning.org.au/>) has lots of useful information, documents and links to help with advance care planning.

New Awareness Campaign

PCFA has just announced that Tyrepower will sponsor a public awareness campaign of posters in men's and women's public toilets across the country. The posters feature photos of prostate cancer sufferers and carers, including our Facilitator, Max Shub.

A Surgeon's Learning Curve

I was interested in the report of a study about an experienced Sydney surgeon learning to perform robot-assisted radical prostatectomies. The surgeon had previously performed more than 3000 open radical prostatectomies.

Between March 2006 and September 2012, the surgeon performed his first 866 robot-assisted radical prostatectomies independently. During the same period the surgeon also performed 686 open radical prostatectomies during the period of the study. All 1552 men in consultation with a multidisciplinary team chose their preferred surgical method and consented to be enrolled in a prospective research database.

The study found that a long learning curve was associated with the use of robot-assisted technology in the conduct of radical prostatectomies and that even experienced surgeons should expect to have inferior outcomes initially.

It took the surgeon about 300 robot-assisted radical prostatectomies to achieve the trifecta of superior urinary, sexual, and oncology outcomes.

The study found that it took more than 700 operations to reach the end of the learning curve with robot-assisted radical prostatectomies when the surgeon reached consistent outcome quality with optimal levels of post-surgical continence and negative surgical margins.

References "*Superior Quality of Life and Improved Surgical Margins Are Achievable with Robotic Radical Prostatectomy After a Long Learning Curve*" European Urology, Volume 65 Issue 1, March 2014, Pages 521-531
<http://prostatecancerinfolink.net/2014/02/28/the-surgical-learning-curve-and-post-ralp-outcomes-over-time/>

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Prostate Heidelberg provides information, education and support for those affected by prostate cancer. At the meetings, we

- 1. Show respect to members and speakers;*
- 2. Allow people to speak and we listen;*
- 3. Respect confidentiality;*
- 4. Allow new ideas to be shared.*

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Annual subscription - \$5 from 1st January per individual, couple, or family.

Please contact Paul Hobson to redirect or cancel receipt of this Newsletter.

MEETING VENUE:

Uniting Church Meeting Room
Seddon St, Ivanhoe
(behind the Commonwealth Bank in Upper Heidelberg Rd).

CALENDAR 2014

Meetings: 10:00am -12:30pm

Wed 12 November '14

Wed 10 December '14 (Christmas Lunch)

Useful Prostate Cancer Websites

ProstMate, individualised Prostate Cancer support www.ProstMate.org.au

Australian Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Groups website www.jimjimjimjim.com;

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia www.pcfa.org.au;

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists www.targetingcancer.com.au;

Cancer Council Victoria www.cancervic.org.au; HELPLINE - 13 11 20

Commonwealth site for palliative care <http://www.health.gov.au/palliativecare>;

Beyond Blue: www.BeyondBlue.org.au;
HELPLINE: 1300 22 4636

Banksia Palliative Care <http://www.BanksiaPalliative.com.au>

Continence Foundation of Australia www.continence.org.au;
HELPLINE: 1800 33 00 66

Blog by Dr Charles "Snuffy" Myers <http://askdrmyers.wordpress.com/>

Cancer Council Australia: www.cancer.gov.au;

National Cancer Institute (US): www.cancer.gov

Lions' Australian Prostate Cancer Collaboration www.prostatehealth.org.au;

Us Too International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network www.UsToo.org

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