

Newsletter **July 2019** – Issue 186

Next Meeting: **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2019**  
 Meeting Hall, Ivanhoe Uniting Church  
 19 Seddon Street, Ivanhoe

Prostate Heidelberg provides information, education and support for those affected by Prostate Cancer. At our meetings we:

- Show respect to members, speakers and guests.**
- Allow people to speak and other attendees to listen.**
- Respect confidentiality.**

**Last Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> June**

At the last meeting, A/Prof Nic Zeps gave an excellent talk on current research and trials.



A/Prof. Nik Zeps was appointed as the inaugural Group Director of Research for Epworth Health Care in April 2017. Prior to that he was the Director of Research at St John of God Health Care from 2012 to 2016 and head of their translational cancer research program since 2008.

**Exercise - Cowan University in Western Australia.**

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) has invested \$1.37 million to fund a world-leading team studying exercise medicine. This research is led by Professors Rob Newton and Daniel Galvão at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia.

Exercise has great potential as a medicine for cancer. Tailored exercise programs can reduce treatment side effects, fatigue and anxiety in cancer patients. This is very good news for the 200,000 Australian men living after a diagnosis with prostate cancer, helping to improve their quality of life. We invite you to watch this [video](#) and learn more about the outcomes of this research and its benefits to those affected by prostate cancer.

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These amazing outcomes are only possible because of our generous donors who have helped PCFA fund the research and even the production of this video.

Please share it with your networks and help us to increase awareness about the benefits of exercise therapy for men with different stages of prostate cancer.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_1o484t3p8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_1o484t3p8&feature=youtu.be)

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### **Prostate Cancer Vaccine - Advantagene**

Advantagene, also known as Candel Therapeutics, has reached its patient enrolment goal in an ongoing Phase 2 trial testing the effectiveness of ProstAtak, the company's prostate cancer vaccine, among men with localized prostate cancer who chose to remain on active surveillance. They have now started enrolling patients for phase 3. ProstAtak is a gene-mediated cytotoxic immunotherapy (GMCI). That's a type of low-toxicity immunotherapy that stimulates patients' immune systems to build up a strong immune response against cancer, much like a vaccine. It is based on the combination of aglatimagene besadenovec — a viral vector that infects cancer cells with the herpes simplex virus — and oral valacyclovir, an antiviral drug. The combo kills cancer cells and, at the same time, triggers an immune response against them. The effectiveness of ProstAtak among patients with localized prostate cancer who chose active surveillance — close

monitoring of cancer progression — as their primary form of treatment is currently being assessed in the randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, ULYSSE trial.

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### **The new MR-linac machine**

The first MR-linac machine in Australia is now provided at the newly expanded Townsville Hospital. Radiation Therapy is the use of high energy X-rays to treat cancer. It works by damaging the DNA of cells, preventing cancer cells from being able to repair themselves and invade healthy tissue.

The MR-linac combines two technologies – a state-of-the-art 1.5T Philips MRI scanner and a best-in-class 7MV linear accelerator, driven by breakthrough real-time adaptive radiotherapy software. This truly ground breaking device has the potential to transform the care that cancer patients receive. It provides the ability to reshape the dose based on daily changes in shape, size and position of tumour and surrounding healthy anatomy, as visualised with MRI, and then enables accurate dose delivery with real-time visualisation of the tumour.

Current radiation treatments rely on CT imaging to locate tumours. The new MR-linac machine instead uses superior diagnostic quality MRI imaging to target the tumour with greater precision, and in real time. The machine tracks tumours during radiation. Live images help to keep the radiation directly on the target, even if it's moving and changing shape, size or location, during treatment.

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This solves a longstanding, unmet need as the cancer care team can now clearly see both tumours and surrounding healthy tissue at any time during radiation treatment rather than relying on pre-treatment images.

With this more detailed imaging, doctors can better target cancers and minimise damage to surrounding tissue, delivering better outcomes for patients.

Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness & Research Centre, a treatment centre of Austin Health, will acquire an Elekta Unity MR-linac, which is planned to be delivered late 2019.

Associate Professor Farshad Foroudi, Director of Radiation Oncology at Austin Health has said that “Unity will give us extraordinary potential in how we deliver radiotherapy, providing the ability to ‘see what you treat’ during treatment and respond based on what is being seen. Aiming radiation beams at a moving target presents a real challenge in radiotherapy because clinicians need to hit the tumour and avoid healthy tissues. Unity, for the first time, will allow our cancer care teams to image the tumour in real time during radiation delivery and adapt the treatment as needed to enable truly personalized radiation therapy.” This will be the first MR-linac in Victoria and is funded by the Victorian Government.

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### **Meditation for Cancer: 3 Exercises**

If you’re being treated for cancer, it’s likely you have a team of medical experts involved in your care. But did you know that complementary medicine has a host of tools that can be very beneficial while you’re in treatment, too?

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) encompasses everything from nutritional supplements and herbs to meditation and yoga. Many of these practices have gained wide acceptance among both patients and healthcare professionals. Of people who have been diagnosed with cancer, 65 percent report utilizing complementary medicine, according to the National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health.

### **Why People Are Turning to CAM**

People turn to CAM for various personal reasons. Some people like the feeling of empowerment at a time when they feel vulnerable. Others value the holistic approach, addressing the interconnectedness of mind and body. Many people have reported that CAM has helped them find relief from the physical and emotional symptoms associated with cancer treatment.

Your cancer treatment may include chemotherapy, surgery, and radiation therapy. All of these therapies have their own side effects. During cancer treatment, many people experience one or more of the following:

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- fatigue
- nausea and vomiting
- diarrhea
- indigestion and bloating
- loss of appetite
- constipation
- pain

As a cancer patient, you understand too well that the effects of cancer are not just physical. It's also common for cancer to affect your emotional health. It's normal to experience a wide range of emotions, including fear, anger, anxiety, and depression. Meditation is most beneficial in helping improve your emotional health.

## Types of Meditation

### Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation involves tuning out the world around you. It's a stress reduction technique that helps you relate to your life and situations in new ways, without necessarily challenging how you process things as a whole. It teaches you to focus on the moment, your breathing, and your body. When your mind strays to thoughts or feelings, you renew your focus on your breathing or body.

Research shows that mindfulness exercises can improve stress and quality of life for people who are cancer survivors. Even brief mindfulness meditation sessions have

been shown to reduce mood disturbance, fatigue, and other stress-related symptoms in cancer patients. The study also concluded that the benefits increase the more you practice.

### Nondirective Meditation

Nondirective meditation is similar to mindfulness. However, instead of blocking your thoughts, memories, and emotions, you allow them to flow through your consciousness without judgment. Research shows that nondirective meditation can help people process emotions and gain perspective on past experiences and feelings.

### Concentrative Meditation

When you practice concentrative meditation, also called one-pointed meditation, you focus on just one thing. What that "thing" is can vary. It might be:

- your breathing
- a candle flame
- a mental image, such as a beach
- an object that's meaningful to you
- a word, phrase, or mantra, like "om" which is used in many Eastern religions

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## Meditation Exercises You Can Use

### 1. Mindfulness: Walking Meditation

1. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes suitable for walking.
2. Ideally, plan to walk for about 20 minutes, in an area that's safe from traffic.
3. Use the best posture with which you are comfortable and walk with your eyes straight ahead, watching the path you are taking.
4. As you're walking, focus your mind on the motion of your feet.

### 2. Nondirective: Meditation Exercise

1. Meditate in a quiet room, free of distractions.
2. Sit, with your eyes closed, in a comfortable chair.
3. You are not trying to empty your mind during this type of meditation. Instead, allow thoughts, images, and sensations to flow through your mind, without judgment or analysis.

4. Ideally, you'll perform this meditation daily, for about 20 minutes. But there are no set times for nondirective meditation.

## Resources

- [MD Anderson Cancer Center](#) has a number of audio exercises for meditation and other mind-body practices. Also provided are audio casts on CAM.
- The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Centre offers free guided mindfulness meditations that are especially helpful
- The NCCIH and National Cancer Institute offers a free, downloadable guide with information on complementary health approaches and alternative medicine for cancer patients.

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**20<sup>th</sup> August speaker**

**Associate Professor Ken Sikaris**



BSc(Hons), MBBS, FRCPA, FAACB, FFSc

Special Practice Responsibilities  
Director of Chemical Pathology

Specialty  
Biochemistry

A University of Melbourne graduate, A/Prof Sikaris trained at the Royal Melbourne, Queen Victoria, Prince Henry's and Heidelberg Repatriation Hospitals. He obtained fellowships from the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA) and the Australasian Association of Clinical Biochemists (AACB) in 1992 and 1997 respectively.

A/Prof Sikaris was appointed Director of Chemical Pathology at St Vincent's Hospital in 1993 and Medical Director of Dorevitch Pathology in 1998 before starting at Melbourne Pathology in 2003. He specialises in Prostate Specific Antigen, cholesterol and quality assurance and is Chair of the RCPAQAP Key Incident Monitoring Program for Australasia.

A NATA-accredited laboratory assessor, he is also founding Fellow of the RCPA Faculty of Science where he is Principal Examiner in Pathology Informatics.

He is a Principal Fellow of the Department of Pathology at Melbourne University and lectures to undergraduates, GPs and a variety of specialist groups across Australia and overseas and a Director of Clinical Support Services for Sonic Healthcare and Director of Chemical Pathology at Melbourne Pathology.

**Next Meeting Tuesday 16/07/2019**

Christine will be giving a meditation exercise



**PHOTO OF MEMBERS ATTENDING LAST MONTHS MEETING**

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## Committee

Max Shub, Facilitator 0413 777342  
Mike Waller, Treasurer  
Spiros Haldas, Library  
David Bellair, Web site  
Christine Dudley, Newsletter  
Michael Meszaros

## 2019 Meetings: 10:00am -12:30pm

Tues 16 Jul  
Tues 20 Aug  
Tues 17 Sep  
Tues 15 Oct  
Tues 19 Nov  
Tues 17 Dec including Xmas lunch

Meetings include a general discussion and round robin. New members in particular are invited to introduce themselves and share their journeys with the Group.

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## Internet Resources

Use the internet to find questions to ask your specialist. It should not be trusted to find answers for your personal case. The web is general. Your specialist specifically knows you.

Our members have found the following **websites** to be useful.

### **Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia**

[www.PCFA.org.au](http://www.PCFA.org.au)

*For guides and help.*

### **Australian Cancer Trials**

[www.australiancancertrials.gov.au/](http://www.australiancancertrials.gov.au/)

*Information on the latest clinical trials in cancer care, including trials that are currently recruiting new participants.*

### **USA Prostate Cancer Foundation (Guide)**

[www.PCF.org/guide/](http://www.PCF.org/guide/)

*PDF guide for men newly diagnosed with prostate cancer*

### **Us TOO International PCa Education (USA)**

[www.UsToo.org](http://www.UsToo.org)

*USA Prostate Cancer support groups information and newsletter.*

### **Cancer Council Victoria**

[www.CancerVic.org.au](http://www.CancerVic.org.au)

*For general help and to understand services supporting men with cancer.*

### **Ex MED Cancer program**

<http://www.EXMedCancer.org.au/>

*A Melbourne-based best-practice exercise medicine program for people with cancer.*

### **ProstMate (PCFA)**

[www.ProstMate.org.au](http://www.ProstMate.org.au)

*The companion for those impacted by prostate cancer, particularly to record all your results.*

### **Beyond Blue**

[www.BeyondBlue.org.au](http://www.BeyondBlue.org.au)

HELPLINE – 1300 22 4636; *for help with depression or anxiety.*

### **Continence Foundation of Australia**

[www.Continence.org.au/](http://www.Continence.org.au/)

HELPLINE – 1800 33 0066. *For assistance with incontinence and for aids (such as pads).*

### **Australian Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Group**

[www.JimJimJimJim.com](http://www.JimJimJimJim.com)

*For men diagnosed with advanced metastatic prostate cancer.*

### **PCRI Prostate Digest (USA)**

<https://pcri.org/insights/>

*Prostate Cancer Research Institute supports research and disseminates information that educates and empowers patients, families, and the medical community*

### **PAACT Newsletter (USA)**

<http://paact.help/newsletter/>

*Patient Advocates for advanced Cancer Treatments.*

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