

Prostate Cancer Support Group - Northern Beaches

Affiliated with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

Proudly sponsored by Hammond Care, Health and Hospitals Limited
*A program of support serving men of all ages, their families, carers and friends
before, during and after diagnosis*

Newsletter No. 193 - September 2019

Editor: Mary Jones

Our next meeting will be Tuesday 1 October

Our speaker will be

Assoc Prof Celi Varol

Urologist at Macquarie University Hospital

His topic is "Targeted and Focal Laser Therapy for Prostate Cancer"

Everyone is welcome

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Monthly Meetings

All people are welcome to attend our regular monthly meetings. No notice is required - simply come along and introduce yourself, or contact us via the website.

When:

Meetings of our support group are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month except in January.

Usual Location:

The Cottage, Mona Vale Hospital, Coronation Street, Mona Vale.

Time: 6:30pm till 8:30pm

October Meeting

On Tuesday 1 October our speaker is Assoc Prof Celi Varol whose interests include Laparoscopic Urological Oncology, Laser and Microwave therapy for Prostate Disease.

Come to this very interesting meeting.

Men's Night in September

The Men's Night Meeting, held on Tuesday 3rd September, was very successfully chaired by Kalli Spencer, who certainly got the guys involved in some very interesting discussions.

This is always a good night and enables the men to discuss amongst themselves things that they maybe wouldn't talk about in front of mixed company.

We certainly hope the men were able to glean some information from some of the frank discussions there, and hope that this "once a year" tradition continues.

Many thanks again to Kalli, not just for his chairing, but also his valuable information.

Alan Taylor

PCFA Community Conversations

Mary and Ron Jones and myself had the privilege of attending this Prostate Cancer Conference on the 20th of September at the Garvan Institute. There were more than a dozen experts speaking, including professionals and survivors. Highlights of prostate cancer management included recent advances and research.

Diagnostic modes included PSMA MRI, Nuclear Medicine and Genetic Sequencing. Therapeutic advances embraced more accurate radiotherapy, chemotherapy, bone saving agents and nuclear therapeutics for metastases, as well as robotic surgery.

Exercise is important in lengthening and improving life with PC. It improves general health, decreases anxiety and also induces immunity to resist cancer progression. It is important to consult an exercise physiologist to prescribe the correct and most effective exercises.

There is much social and psychological unmet need amongst patients and their families. PCFA is to increase the introduction of more prostate cancer specialist nurses to help with this as funds become available. In Australia there are currently 50 nurses in practice, with an aim to increase this to 90 in the near future. They can help to develop a case plan for the patient and ensure on-going care

PCFA also offers an online "distress screen" for men, which can indicate the state of one's mental health

Overall it was a most enlightening day, highlighting the vast amount of new research, the benefits of exercise and the unmet social needs of prostate cancer survivors and their families. PCFA plan to put the lectures on their website soon.

Robert Taranto

Thank you Robert for this report. It certainly was an informative day. With the research, treatment options and better nursing care the future is looking good for prostate cancer patients.

Mary J

Changes to DNA and Cancer

The FOXA1 gene is an important driver of prostate cancer formation and growth

Posted by Wendy Winnall on September 16, 2019

When back-to-back articles are published in one of the world's top scientific journals, Nature, we know that something exciting is going on. Scientists from two different laboratories have discovered the mechanisms by which a gene called FOXA1 drives prostate cancer formation. FOXA1 is therefore a potential target for new drugs to block growth of prostate cancer.

Changes to DNA are the main cause of cancer
Changes to DNA are the underlying cause of cancers. Risk factors such as age or exposure to radiation ultimately lead to changes in DNA. These DNA changes cause normal cells to change into tumour cells. DNA problems are

commonly found in tumour cells. A lot of research has gone into working out what these changes are. This has been very useful for developing new therapies and understand how cancer is formed.

The sequence of human DNA carries instructions to make proteins. These instructions are called **genes**. Genes make up less than 10% of our DNA. The rest of the DNA has many other roles. One of these roles is to control when and where genes are switched on to make proteins. There are patches of DNA surrounding genes that can be used to control when the gene is switched on, therefore controlling production of specific proteins.

Molecules called **transcription factors** bind to these small DNA patches, to control the use of genes.

To read more about the **FOXA1 gene** go to –

<https://tinyurl.com/y56mtmvz>

Prostate Test Guide

PCFA have released a new online tool to help empower men with a better understanding of the PSA test for prostate cancer. The *PSA test guide* can be used by men before discussing testing with their doctor. This week's blog discusses PSA testing and cancer screening programs in Australia, to unravel some of the confusion around this often-controversial topic.

PCFA has now released an [online tool](#) to provide more information about the PSA test. We encourage people to read this website to find trustworthy information about PSA testing. The aim of this tool is to provide evidence-based information to aid men when making a decision about whether to have the PSA test.

The online tool goes hand-in-hand with our PSA testing guidelines. PCFA's guidelines from 2016 recommend that:

Men with no symptoms should discuss PSA testing with their doctor. For men choosing to test, they should be tested every 2 years from ages 50 to 69. Starting at 40 or 45 is recommended for men with a family history.

In this blog article, we discuss:

PSA testing of men with no symptoms This refers to PSA tests taken by men who don't have symptoms or a diagnosis with prostate cancer. The aim is to find the cancer early. PSA testing in Australia is common in older men. These are usually men who specifically ask their doctor for a PSA test.

PSA Screening – This refers to a formalized population screening programme. In Australia we have population screening programs for breast, cervical and bowel cancer. These programs aim to regularly test every person in the appropriate age group (although in reality, not everyone participates). They involve sending letters or kits to encourage people to have regular tests.

What is the PSA test?

PSA testing for men with no symptoms: The PSA test is a blood test for a protein called prostate-specific antigen. PSA protein is shed by prostate cells. A small amount of PSA can be found in the blood of men who have a prostate gland. Prostate cancer cells usually shed more PSA than normal prostate cells. So a high PSA reading could mean prostate cancer is present. But high PSA can also signal inflammation, infection or a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate. Many men (roughly 75%) with high PSA levels don't have prostate cancer. After a high PSA test, a biopsy can be used to diagnose prostate cancer. MRI is also helpful in detecting the cancer or giving the all-clear before biopsy.

A man who goes to the doctor with symptoms of prostate cancer, such as disrupted urine flow or pain, will probably have a PSA test. This is an important first step towards diagnosis. But it's not the same as tests done to detect prostate cancer early. Symptoms don't usually arise until the disease has been around for a while. Early diagnosis involves testing men with no symptoms to get an early warning that tumours are growing.

PSA test to monitor prostate cancer: Once a man is diagnosed with prostate cancer, PSA testing is a very useful method to monitor the cancer. Treatments such as surgery or radiotherapy can reduce PSA to undetectable levels. PSA tests after this time are currently the best way to warn us that the cancer might be returning, or that the whole cancer was not removed by the initial treatment. PSA levels are also an early warning that a treatment is no longer working for men with advanced prostate cancer. PSA tests are used during active surveillance, to indicate whether a low-risk, localised prostate cancer is progressing, and treatment may be necessary. The controversy over the PSA test does not include its use to monitor an already-diagnosed prostate cancer; this is well-established and agreed upon.

To read more on this important topic go to –

<https://tinyurl.com/y64tn4u5>

Meetings for 2019

Tuesday 5 November – Lucy Carpenter,

Dietician from Rebound Health

Tuesday 4 December – Christmas Social

Norma's September Quiz

1. What does the name Jerusalem actually mean?
2. Who wrote all the music for The Lion King?
3. Which dam harnesses the water of the Colorado river?
4. Which country is the world's largest supplier of Teak?
5. Name the four English Test venues?
6. Who painted the famous masterpiece called "The Scream"?
7. Who is said to have invented the humble sandwich?
8. If you were spending the currency LEK which country would you be in?
9. What kind of boat is Das Boot featured in the film?
10. What did the crocodile swallow in Peter Pan?

Answers to Norma's August Quiz

1. What is the compulsive eating disorder called? *Bulimia*
2. What do citronella candles smell of? *Lemon*
3. Which song begins with "Friday night and the lights are low"? *Dancing Queen*
4. What is the common name for hydrated magnesium sulphate? *Epsom Salts*
5. Where, in the UK, is the historic "ceremony of the keys" held every evening? *Tower of London*
6. Who was the first British astronaut on the space station MIR? *David Foale*
7. Who was the second wife that Henry V111 beheaded? *Catherine Howard*
8. Which breed of dog does not have a pink tongue? *Chow*
9. How many valves does a trumpet have? *None*
10. Who succeeded Wordsworth as poet Laureate? *Tennyson*

Did you know?

PCFA has a Facebook page with lots of information about upcoming events.

Keep up to date at

<https://www.facebook.com>

November Melbourne Cup Night

As well as our speaker on 5 November we will also have our traditional 'best hat/best outfit' competition.

So get out those glad rags and join in the fun.

Publicity

One of the main aims of the NB Prostate Cancer Support Group is to reach out to men and their families and provide information and emotional support for those diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. PCFA Ambassador Programme we may be able to reach more men's groups and clubs and spread the word about the importance of regular testing for prostate cancer.

This year, we are hoping that with the support of the PCFA Ambassador Programme we may be able to reach more men's groups and clubs and spread the word about the importance of regular testing for prostate cancer.

If you know of any organisation that may benefit from having one of the Ambassador Speakers visit them please let one of the committee members know.

We are always seeking ways to reach the public and articles about our Group have appeared in Pittwater Online News and the 'What's on Pittwater' website provides information about our meetings.

Disclaimer

From time to time in our newsletters we provide information about developments in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer, research articles, documents, presentations and other interesting materials. However, the Group's Executive and the editor of this newsletter do not have the medical expertise required to make an informed evaluation of the conclusions and recommendations presented in such materials, and we have not verified such conclusions and recommendations through The information presented in this newsletter must not be interpreted as being endorsed or recommended by the Executive or the editor. Any recommendations made in such materials may not be applicable in your particular case.

Before implementing any recommendations made in the materials that are reported, it is essential

that you obtain advice from appropriately qualified professionals, as no single treatment option is better than any other in all cases. While the information in this newsletter should be of interest, there is no substitute for getting informed medical advice from your own GP, specialist and other medical professionals

Contact Us

Postal address

Northern Beaches Prostate Cancer Support Group

PO Box 324, Mona Vale, NSW 1660

Web site

Our web site provides details about the activities of the group, meetings, contact persons and lots of other useful information:

www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org

Personal support

If you would like support, advice or assistance contact any of the committee:

Treasurer - Alan Taylor Phone: 02 9981 2616

Library - Ron Jones Phone: 02 9997 2709

Programme Organiser -

Denise Taylor Phone: 02 9981 2616

Catering - Jo-Ann Steeves Phone: 02 9918 6575

Eleanor Swansbra Phone: 02 9918 6428

Norma Norman Phone: 02 9918 4929

Committee member, newsletter editor and web site manager:

Mary Jones Phone: 0409 909 356

Email: info@prostate-cancer-support-nb.org

Useful websites:

www.pcfa.org.au Telephone: 02 9438 7000

See PCFA Newsletters online at:

www.pcfa.org.au/articleLive/pages/PCFA-Newsletters.html

Other useful links-

www.prostatehealth.org.au

www.cancercouncil.com.au, www.acf.com.au

www.prostate-cancer-support-act.net

www.prostate-cancer-support-sydneynorth.org

If you are aware of news, products, publications, web sites, services or events that may be of interest to members of the group I'd be happy to be informed of them.

Past issues of our newsletters can be viewed on our website: www.prostate-cancer-support-nb.org

