



Below the Belt!

Vol. 22 No. 4

September – November, 2023

Newsletter of The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.
(ABN No. 35 871 442 176)



September is “Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”

Details of our ‘Awareness Evening’ on Monday September 18th (page 2)

What's to Come

Group Meeting – Monday September 18th

Several Local Clinicians
Prostate Cancer Journey

Group Meeting – Monday October 16th

To Be Advised
Subject

Group Meeting – Monday November 20th

To Be Advised
Subject

Meetings are held at the Emu Sports Club (Home of Leonay Golf Club)

Gather at 6-30pm for a 7-00pm start.



Our Web Site www.prostatesupport.org.au is now sponsored
by the Members of Emu Plains Lions Club

NEPEAN/BLEUE MOUNTAINS PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP INC

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

**The community is invited to join us for a
PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS EVENING**

**Monday, September 18th, 2023
At the Emu Sports Club in Leonay
(Home of Leonay Golf Club)
6.30pm for a 6.45pm start**

*The event is supported by
the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia*

**The Nepean/Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group
will hold an information evening to raise awareness and
provide more information about prostate cancer.**

**Join us to hear from expert health professionals covering all aspects of the
disease, from risks and detection through to the treatment options available.**

**General Practitioner (GP)
Urologist
Radiation Oncologist
Medical Oncologist
Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse**

**A light supper will be provided, with time available to ask our
guest speakers any questions you have about prostate cancer.**

**For more information:
Group President, David Wilkinson
1300 13 38 78**

www.prostatesupport.org.au

Prostate cancer deaths on the rise with calls for better awareness

Prostate cancer deaths have jumped more than 25 per cent since 2006 and only a third of cases are being detected in the earliest stage of the disease, new data reveals.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in Australia, with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) reporting 70 new cases and ten deaths every day.

With an estimated 32 per cent population rise in the past 16 years, the 25 per cent rise in deaths since 2006 does indicate a lower number of fatalities per capita, but still places significant pressure on health services as the scale of the cancer rises.

Although the average age of diagnosis is 69, around 3600 Australian men are diagnosed under the age of 60 each year, including one 43-year-old man, who was diagnosed last year after being tested due to his family history of the disease.

Currently, it seems that prostate cancer cases are out of sync with population growth. Year on year Australia sees about a one per cent population rise, but 2022 recorded a five per cent rise in case numbers and a 6.7 per cent increase in deaths.

"Over 3,700 Australian men will die of prostate cancer this year. With concerted action, many of these deaths can be avoided," PCFA CEO Anne Savage said.

"High numbers of men experience major physical and mental health challenges up to 10 years or more after their initial treatment, which means we need to step up and make new medicines and treatments available more rapidly, along with access to support."

Estimates suggest 25,487 Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2023, only 36 per cent of those cases will be detected in stage one.

"One of the biggest barriers to early detection is lack of awareness - Australia has spent very little public funding on educating the community about prostate cancer and we need a government-supported nationwide campaign," Ms Savage explained.

"If we have learned anything during Covid it's that messaging matters."

From 1982 to 2018, the five-year relative survival for prostate cancer improved from 58% to 95.6%.

This makes it one of the highest survival rates, but only for those diagnosed early. In total male cancer fatalities it ranks only behind lung cancer.

This survival rate varies broadly based on demography, favouring richer, metropolitan patients.

A regional citizen with prostate cancer has a 24 per cent lower chance of recovery than someone closer to the more equipped city hospitals.

"Early detection is key to survival, but to achieve higher rates of earlier detection we must have government and community support," said PCFA Chairman Steve Callister.

"We must do everything in our power to prevent late diagnosis and the tragic loss of so many of our fathers and sons."

Breakthroughs have improved prostate cancer treatment and quality of life.

"Management and treatments have had remarkable advances over the past three years, we have nuclear medicines and diagnostic technologies that could not have been imagined even ten years ago," Ms Savage explained.

Recent surgeries have reduced side effects by avoiding damaging nerves, and the University of South Australia, as a part of a joint study, recently located three biomarkers that could help clinicians track likely rates of progression in prostate cancer patients.

To quote a recently diagnosed survivor ;

"For a lot of men they're afraid because they're unsure of what the test means ... but being uncomfortable for five seconds sure beats dying."

(This article is based on a recent article that was published in 'The Australian' newspaper)



the LONG *run*

OUR support Group has once again entered a team in the PCFA's "Long Run" fundraiser.

Why not come and join us? 72 kms in one month is a bit over 2kms per day (not a huge task) Join our team and get friends and family to sponsor you. If you cannot enter yourself consider sponsoring one of our team members.

All funds raised are for the Prostate Cancer Foundation to help fund ongoing research. To join our team or donate follow the following link:

<https://www.thelongrun.org.au/fundraiser/nepeanbluemountainsprostatecancersupportgroup>

RUN, WALK OR RIDE YOUR WAY

HELP LOVE GO THE DISTANCE.

Run, walk or ride 72km for men with prostate cancer this September. Help love go the distance against Australia's leading cause of cancer.

A Prostate Cancer “Refresher”

Many of us, who may be fortunate enough to be relatively long term survivors of Prostate Cancer have quite possibly forgotten or are unaware of the terms used when dealing with this disease.

Here is an article from the Cancer Council that explains the terms etc.

This can also be handy if you are asked to help a man who may have just commenced his ‘Prostate’ journey.

Staging and prognosis for prostate cancer

These tests help your doctors work out if you have prostate cancer and whether it has spread. This is called staging. It helps you and your health care team decide which management or treatment option is best for you.

Learn more about:

- [Staging prostate cancer](#)
- [Grading prostate cancer](#)
- [Risk of progression](#)
- [Prognosis](#)

Staging prostate cancer

The most common staging system for prostate cancer is the TNM system. In this system, letters and numbers are used to describe the cancer, with higher numbers indicating larger size or spread.

Your doctor may also describe the cancer as:

- **localised (early)** – the cancer is contained inside the prostate
- **locally advanced** – the cancer is larger and has spread outside the prostate to nearby tissues or nearby organs such as the bladder, rectum or pelvic wall
- **advanced (metastatic)** – the cancer has spread to distant parts of the body such as the lymph nodes or bone. This is called prostate cancer even if the tumour is in a different part of the body.

TNM staging system

T stands for tumour	Refers to the size of the tumour (T0–4). The higher the number, the larger the cancer.
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N stands for nodes	N0 means the cancer has not spread to lymph nodes, while N1 means it has spread to lymph nodes in the pelvis.
M stands for metastasis	M0 means the cancer has not spread outside of the pelvis, while M1 means it has spread to lymph nodes, bone or other organs outside the pelvis.

Grading prostate cancer

The biopsy results will show the grade of the cancer. Grading describes how the cancer cells look under a microscope compared to normal cells.

For many years, the Gleason scoring system has been used to grade the tissue taken during a biopsy. If you have prostate cancer, you will have a Gleason score between 6 (slightly abnormal) and 10 (more abnormal).

A newer system has been introduced to simplify the grading and make it easier to understand. Known as the International Society of Urological Pathologists (ISUP) Grade Group system, this grades prostate cancer from 1 (least aggressive) to 5 (most aggressive).

Risk of progression

Based on the size and grade of the tumour, and your PSA level before the biopsy, localised prostate cancer will be classified as:

- **low risk** – the cancer is slow growing and not aggressive
- **intermediate risk** – the cancer is likely to grow faster and be mildly to moderately aggressive
- **high risk** – the cancer is likely to grow quickly and be more aggressive.

This is known as the risk of progression. The risk category helps guide management and treatment.

Risk level	Gleason score	ISUP Grade Group
low	6 or less	1
intermediate	7	2-3
high	8–10	4-5

Your doctor will also look at your PSA level and the tumour (T) size to help work out the cancer's risk level.

Working out the stage, grade and risk category of prostate cancer is complex, so ask your doctor to explain how it applies to you. You can also call Cancer Council 13 11 20 for information and support.

Prognosis

Prognosis means the expected outcome of a disease. You may wish to discuss your prognosis with your doctor, but it is not possible for anyone to predict the exact course of the disease.

To work out your prognosis, your doctor will consider test results, the type of prostate cancer, the stage, grade and risk category, how well you respond to treatment, and factors such as your age, fitness and medical history.

Prostate cancer often grows slowly, and even the more aggressive cases of prostate cancer tend to grow more slowly than other types of cancer. Some low-risk prostate cancers grow so slowly that they never cause any symptoms or spread, others don't grow at all.

Compared with other cancers, prostate cancer has one of the highest five-year survival rates if diagnosed early.



A few upcoming Awareness Events

Machinery and Hobby Show - Saturday, 16th September - Sunday 17th September, 2023
9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Hawkesbury Showground, Racecourse Road Clarendon NSW 2756

John will be there early on Saturday to set up and will be there all day. On Sunday, He can't get there till just after 11, then the rest of the day

He is asking for a few people to help him man the stall on these days. This is not a difficult task. You just need to hand out information and talk to men (and their partners) and, if you like old machinery etc. it can be a very interesting day.

Hawkesbury Canoe Classic – Saturday 28th of October 2023.
This is one of our 'traditional' days out. We provide assistance in the scrutineering of the boats taking part in the race. This is not a difficult task and no technical knowledge is required. Lunch (Sausage Sandwich) is provided. Usually a fun day.

If you can assist on either of these days please contact John Kemp

johnchriskemp@gmail.com

Recent awareness events

Shannons Classic Car Show – Sydney Motor Sport Park



Our Group's hardworking Promotions officer, John Kemp, and I attended the recent Shannons Classic Car Show at the Sydney Motor Sport Park (Eastern Creek).

The stand on this day was for the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCFA)

We were able to speak to a lot of men (and partners) about Prostate Cancer and hand out information. (According to John, we handed out close to 100 booklets)

A reassuring change over the years is the number of men that will come up and openly discuss their

situation and dealings with Prostate Cancer. I well remember, many years ago, the first awareness stall that I helped man. Men would literally cross to the other side of the street when they spotted the word "Prostate" Maybe we are starting to get the message out there!

Mens Health Awareness – Bunnings Penrith.



John Kemp was again on deck to man an information table at the recent Men's Health Awareness night at Bunnings Penrith. This time John was assisted by Group President, David Wilkinson.

Again, John and David were able to discuss Prostate Cancer with many men and help promote awareness of not only this disease but also the Nepean / Blue mountains Prostate Cance Support Group.

As you can see in the photo, David really got himself 'entangled' in proceedings.

(For information David's "friend" is a Black Headed Python - weighing about 8Kgs.)

Our resident 'Snake Charmer'
President David Wilkinson



Celibacy

What is Celibacy?

Celibacy can be a choice in life, or a condition imposed by circumstances.

While attending a Marriage Weekend, my wife and I listened to the instructor declare, 'It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other.'

He then addressed the men,

'Can you name and describe your wife's favourite flower?

I leaned over, touched my wife's hand gently, and whispered,

'Self-raising, isn't it?'

And thus began my life of celibacy.....

A Laugh at Life !

Old Timers

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house and, after eating, the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two gentlemen were talking, and one said, 'Last night we went out to a new restaurant and it was really great. I would recommend it very highly.'
The other man said, 'What is the name of the restaurant?'

The first man thought and thought and finally said, 'What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know... The one that's red and has thorns.'
'Do you mean a rose?'
'Yes, that's the one,' replied the man. He then turned towards the kitchen and yelled, 'Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night?'



...and another one

Morris, an 82 year-old man, went to the doctor to get a physical.

A few days later, the doctor saw Morris walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm.

A couple of days later, the doctor spoke to Morris and said, 'You're really doing great, aren't you?'

Morris replied, 'Just doing what you said, Doc:
Get a hot mamma and be cheerful.'

The doctor said, 'I didn't say that. I said, 'You've got a heart murmur; be careful.'



Nominated as best short joke of the year ...

A 3-year-old boy examined his testicles while taking a bath.
'Mum', he asked, 'Are these my brains?'
'Not yet,' she replied.

The Importance of Sleep.

A man walked out of his front door one day and was confronted by an older, very friendly dog. The dog smiled, wagged his tail and when the man went back inside the house, the dog followed him in.

The dog was fit and healthy and obviously well cared for. He followed the man through the house and onto the back verandah where he spotted the old couch. The dog hopped up onto the couch and promptly went to sleep. Towards the end of the day, the dog got up, went to the front door and patiently waited to be let out and went on his way.

The next day the same thing happened. The dog arrived, happy and smiling and when let in, went to the back verandah, hopped onto the couch and went to sleep. End of the day, asked to be let out and went on his way.

This went on for several days, so, to find out the circumstances, the man decided to tie a note to the dog's collar explaining that the dog had been coming to his house and quietly sleeping all day.

The next day when the dog arrived he had another note pinned to his collar.

"He shares a house with four small children; he is just trying to catch up on his sleep.

Can I Please Come With Him Tomorrow?"



Fun in court

A man found himself in court charged with biting a Police dog.
Judge; Why did you bite the dog?
Defendant : Well he bit me first!
(This is actually a true quote !!)

Contact Us

Telephone 1300 13 38 78
Email info@prostatesupport.org.au
Web Site www.prostatesupport.org.au
Facebook
'Nepean Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group'
Postal Address
Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group
P.O. Box 763
Kingswood, N.S.W. 2747

An Irishman walked into a bar in downtown Toronto and ordered a drink.

Noticing his accent, the bartender asks him
"What brings you to Canada?"

The Irishman replies: **"I was in a pub in Dublin and the coaster under my glass said 'drink Canada dry' and I thought - I'll give it a go!"**



PAYMENT OF Membership Fees. Members can pay their annual Group Membership Fees by direct deposit to our bank account.

Our Westpac Account Name is 'Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group'. BSB is 032-837 and the Account No. is 206701. Current Fees are \$10.00 P.A. per family. Don't forget to advise who you are in the Lodgement Reference i.e. "John Smith Fees 2023"



Would you like to make a cash donation to our group?
Do you know any Group or Organisation that would like to make a donation?
We are a registered charitable organisation and all donations are fully tax deductible.
All donations help us to support cancer and health related projects in our local area.
If you are able to assist, contact our Treasurer, Graeme Renshaw.

Board Members of the Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group for 2023 are as follows:-

President :-	David Wilkinson
Vice President / Treasurer :-	Graeme Renshaw
Secretary :-	Wayne Singleton
Newsletter Editor / Publicity:-	Alan Howard
Web Site Manager :-	John Parsonage
Promotions Officer :-	John Kemp

The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Support Group Inc. is grateful for the support of its members and various local groups. This enables us to produce this newsletter and cover other incidentals in the running of the group.
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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Group.

The Group does not offer medical or other professional advice.

Articles presented in this or any other issues are presented only as a means of sharing information and opinions with members.

It is important that health professionals should be consulted before making any decisions about any treatments.

This newsletter has been compiled by Alan Howard from material culled or provided.

email: nbmpcsgnews@gmail.com

Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Web Site www.prostatesupport.org.au