

Department of Veterans' Affairs
Ex-Service Organisation (ESO) Round Table

Lovett Tower
WODEN, ACT

Meeting No. 3

26 & 27 November 2009

AGENDA ITEM 6

Robotic Surgery and Prostate Cancer

What is Prostate Cancer ?

Prostate cancer is an abnormal growth of cells in the prostate that form a lump (tumour). In time, without treatment, it may spread to other organs, particularly the bones and lymph nodes, which can be life threatening.

What are the symptoms of prostate cancer ?

In the early stages of prostate cancer, there may be no symptoms at all. As prostate cancer develops, symptoms can include the need to urinate frequently, particularly at night, sudden urges to urinate, difficulty in starting urine flow, a slow, interrupted flow and dribbling afterwards, pain during urination or blood in the urine or semen.

Prostate Cancer Statistics

For a man in his 40s – 1 in 1000
For a man in his 50s – 12 in 1000
For a man in his 60s – 45 in 1000
For a man in his 70s – 80 in 1000
For a man in his 80s – 200 in 1000

Each year

- 3,300 men die from prostate cancer, equal to the deaths from breast cancer
- 20,000 new cases diagnosed every year
- Most common cancer in men
- Second most common cause of cancer deaths in men
- For every 100 men who die in Sydney/Melbourne, 120 die in rural Australia – lack of education, awareness, services, male attitude

Risks

- Age
- Family history of prostate cancer – father or brother
- Symptoms – maybe asymptomatic

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Detection

- Prostate specific antigen – role of screening in over 40 age group
- Digital Rectum Examination (DRE) and prostatic biopsy, some urologists do up to 20 biopsies of the prostate. Pathology result will include Gleason score (measure of aggressive nature of the tumour)

Prostate Cancer Treatment Options – Advantages and disadvantages

- Watchful waiting (which assumes the cancer grows slowly also dependent on aggressive nature of tumour and age of patient)
- Radical prostatectomy
- Brachytherapy
- External radiation
- Combinations of the above
- Robotic surgery
- Hormonal

Side Effects of Treatment

These relate to incontinence and impotence, blood loss, ease of tumour removal, open verses keyhole surgery and time of rehabilitation.

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23 NOVEMBER 2009