

Medical Advisors

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Thanks!

Thought of The Day

A battle is won by
him who is firmly
resolved to win it.

Leo Tolstoy
(War and Peace)

September is prostate cancer awareness month in Canada

SAE2023 It's coming! You're invited

September Awareness Evening about Prostate Cancer



Keynote address by

Dr. Sri Navaratnam

MBBS, PhD, FRCPC

President and CEO
CancerCare Manitoba (CCMB)

***"CCMB Hope and Healing Program': how it will help
Manitobans with prostate cancer"***

The audience will have opportunity to ask questions and make comments

Date and time: Monday, September 18, 2023 7-9 pm

Location: Caboto Centre, 1055 Wilkes Ave., Winnipeg

Everybody Welcome Free Admission Free Parking Door Prizes



The Manitoba Prostate Cancer Support Group offers support to prostate cancer patients but does not recommend any particular treatment modalities, medications or physicians ; such decisions should be made in consultation with your doctor.

MRI innovation makes cancerous tissue light up and easier to see

New technology has promising potential to improve cancer screening

A new form of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) that makes cancerous tissue glow in medical images could help doctors more accurately detect and track the progression of cancer over time.

The innovation, developed by researchers at the University of Waterloo, creates images in which cancerous tissue appears to light up compared to healthy tissue, making it easier to see.

"Our studies show this new technology has promising potential to improve cancer screening, prognosis and treatment planning," said Alexander Wong, Canada Research Chair in Artificial Intelligence and Medical Imaging and a professor of systems design engineering at Waterloo.

Irregular packing of cells leads to differences in the way water molecules move in cancerous tissue compared to healthy tissue. The new technology, called synthetic correlated diffusion imaging, highlights these differences by capturing, synthesizing and mixing

MRI signals at different gradient pulse strengths and timings.

In the largest study of its kind, the researchers collaborated with medical experts at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, several Toronto hospitals and the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research to apply the technology to a cohort of 200 patients with prostate cancer.



Compared to standard MRI techniques, synthetic correlated diffusion imaging was better at delineating significant cancerous tissue, making it a potentially powerful tool for doctors and radiologists.

"Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in men worldwide and

the most frequently diagnosed cancer among men in more developed countries," said Wong, also a director of the Vision and Image Processing (VIP) Lab at Waterloo. "That's why we targeted it first in our research.

"We also have very promising results for breast cancer screening, detection, and treatment planning. This could be a game-changer for many kinds of cancer imaging and clinical decision support."

The core research team also included Hayden Gunraj and Vignesh Sivan, engineering graduate students at Waterloo, and Dr. Masoom Haider of the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute.

Their paper, Synthetic correlated diffusion imaging hyperintensity delineates clinically significant prostate cancer, appears in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-06872-7

March 21, 2022

Source: <https://uwaterloo.ca/news/media/mri-innovation-makes-cancerous-tissue-light-and-easier-see>

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Learning the basics about prostate cancer

As part of our outreach activity we provide speakers available to any community service group interested in learning about and upgrading their knowledge about prostate cancer. If you are part of a group that would like to learn, or review, the important basics that everyone should

know about this disease, presented at an easy-to-understand layperson level, please contact Pat Feschuk at 204-654-3898 to schedule a presentation.

It takes about an hour and allows for active engagement between speaker (s) and audience to explore a variety

of interests and concerns. There is no cost for this service. Size of the group doesn't matter, but the more the merrier. You provide the audience and we'll provide the speaker.

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Sleep disturbances are underappreciated in prostate cancer survivorship

We all got the memo that sleep is foundational for good health, right?

Yet, it remains easy to overlook the importance of sleep amid the challenges of managing a prostate cancer diagnosis. Even within my own self-care mantra M.E.D.S (meditation, exercise, diet, sleep) I have probably paid too little attention to its final pillar.

There are several reasons for this. Sleep is so elemental, like the air we breathe, that it's easy to overlook it while managing the more dramatic elements of prostate cancer and its treatment—the mood swings, challenges to sexuality and masculinity, incontinence issues, relationship challenges, simple survival. The good news is there is much we can do to improve our sleep.

Recent studies highlight that sleep disturbances are an underappreciated element of prostate cancer care and why it's so critical.

"Sleep deficiency is linked to chronic health problems, including heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, obesity, and depression. It is also linked to accidents that can result in injury or death," the Association of American Medical Colleges noted in a June 2023 article.

A 2022 study, "Sleep disturbances are underappreciated in prostate cancer survivorship," reported that "the prevalence of sleep disturbances among prostate cancer (PCa) survivors, and extent of urologist involvement in sleep care are not well-studied."

More than 300 PCa survivors and urologists were surveyed about sleep disturbances and survivorship care practices. Researchers found that "most PCa survivors had sleep disturbances, including 50.9% with poor sleep quality, 18.0% with clinical/severe insomnia, and 36.5% at high-risk for

sleep apnea. Few urologists routinely screened for sleep disturbances, as recommended in national cancer survivorship guidelines."

Their conclusions were clear: "Optimal PCa survivorship care should incorporate screening for sleep disturbances, addressing comorbid factors affecting sleep and referring to sleep medicine when appropriate." What makes this an even more pressing issue is that sleep disturbances and resultant quality of life concerns also plague caregivers of those with prostate cancer. In the 2022 study, Poor sleep health and quality of life among caregivers of patients with prostate cancer, researchers surveyed 81 caregivers of patients with PCa and found 77% suffered poor sleep, 22% met the criteria for clinical insomnia, and 43% used sleep medication at least once a week.

"Our results support the hypothesis that poor sleep quality is prevalent in caregivers of patients with PCa, and they may be at increased risk for undiagnosed sleep disorders such as insomnia or sleep apnea," the study notes.

"Additionally, we found that caregivers of patients with PCa had worse psychological well-being than the general population and experienced high levels of caregiver stress. This corroborates previous research showing higher rates of depression and anxiety among PCa caregivers, stemming from feelings of guilt, concerns about treatment outcomes, and financial worries. Further research is warranted to examine whether improvements in the management of sleep disorders and healthy sleep practices can enhance quality of life among cancer caregivers."

In my own experience, the MEDS self-care mantra is effective because each element supports the others. So,

meditation, exercise and diet can all help promote good sleep. For me, that means if I quieten the mind with a short meditation in the evening, I enjoy much better quality of sleep. If I try and avoid eating too late into the night, abstain from coffee after midday, reduce alcohol consumption, and end the day tired and "sleep hungry" from physical exercise, all these things promote good sleep.

All the usual guidelines around good "sleep hygiene" apply, of course. Getting off tech devices a good hour before bedtime, not having a mobile phone by your bed or a TV in the bedroom, preserving your bed as a sanctuary exclusively for sleep (not working on a laptop in bed for instance).

Not becoming anxious when you are having trouble sleeping is easier said than done, but regarding it as simply a chance to rest body and mind, practicing a short meditation if unable to sleep, has become a healthy habit for me. Medicinal cannabis has also been a huge help for me. Without it, I might wake three to four times a night for a trip to the loo. With it, I might wake once or twice and occasionally sleep through.

If even the word "sleep" is loaded for you because of past issues, replace it with "rest." And if sleep issues persist, seek advice from your GP.

More information: Fred Gong et al, Sleep disturbances are underappreciated in prostate cancer survivorship, *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases* (2022). DOI: 10.1038/s41391-022-00630-6

Sameer Thakker et al, Poor sleep health and quality of life among caregivers of patients with prostate cancer, *BJUI Compass* (2022). DOI: 10.1002/bco2.157

Provided by Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

AUGUST 8, 2023

by **Tim Baker**
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

Source: <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-08-disturbances-underappreciated-prostate-cancer-survivorship.html>

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Plant-Based Diets and Prostate Cancer

Two new studies suggest benefits of plant-based diets on prostate cancer risk, outcomes

“Plant-based” foods are increasingly on the radar. You can grab a green juice at most chain coffee shops, a decent salad at airport restaurants, or a meat-free veggie burger at some locations of the major burger chains. And at many local grocery stores or farmers’ markets, you can purchase ingredients to cook a veggie-based meal.

Research shows many benefits of a plant-based diet, especially for overall and heart health. For example, in looking across multiple studies, vegetarians were found to have a 9% lower risk of death overall, 29% lower risk of death from heart disease, and 18% lower risk of cancer vs. non-vegetarians. Now, two new papers authored by PCF-funded researchers report benefits of plant-based diets for prostate cancer.

A plant-based diet may reduce risk of developing or dying from prostate cancer

A team including PCF-funded investigators Dr. Stacy Loeb and Dr. Stacey Kenfield reviewed multiple studies to address this question. The studies asked participants about their

diet, followed them for many years, and counted the number of prostate cancer cases and deaths from prostate cancer.

There was some variation in the definition of the diet; generally, vegetarians/vegans were compared to nonvegetarians. Overall, the authors reported that a plant-based diet was linked to either a decreased risk of prostate cancer or had no effect on risk.

Aligned with these findings, a study authored by Drs.

overall was linked to lower risk of fatal prostate cancer. Men with the highest plant-based diet score had a 19% lower risk of fatal prostate cancer vs men with the lowest diet score.

- ◇ Eating a healthful plant-based diet was linked to a lower risk of being diagnosed with localized prostate cancer.
- ◇ Some effects of diet differed by age. For example, among men under age 65 at diagnosis, eating a more plant-based diet was linked to a 42% lower risk of advanced prostate cancer.

Dr. Mucci presented some results of this study in a PCF webinar which can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/732707996/2a76bbd9e5>.

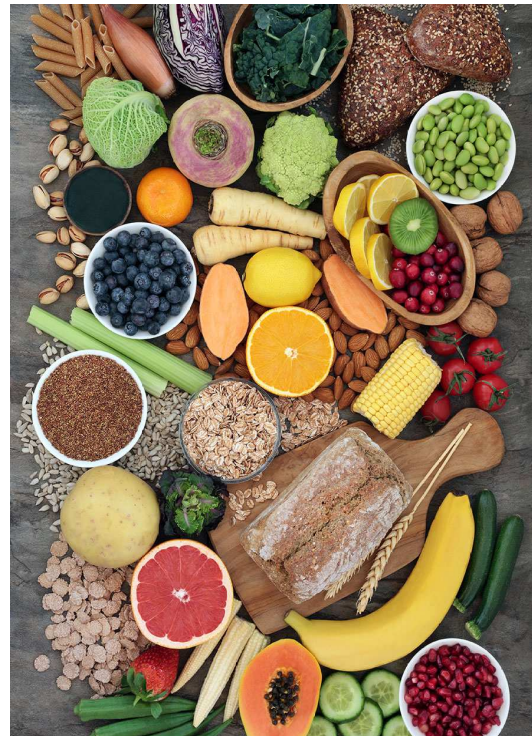
What is a plant-based diet?

Defining a plant-based diet can be challenging: it ranges from vegan (eating no animal products) to vegetarian (eating no fish, chicken, or other meat) to semi-vegetarian (eating little fish or meat). Not all plant-based foods are considered equal: think of chips and soda vs. a kale salad. To better define the gradations and quality of these various diets, some studies use a plant-based diet “index,” (or score) based on how often a person reported eating certain foods over the previous year. Foods were categorized as healthy plant-based (e.g., whole grains, vegetables, nuts), less-healthy plant-based (e.g., fruit juices, refined grains, desserts), and animal group (e.g., dairy, eggs, meat).

Loeb and Kenfield, along with PCF-funded scientists Dr. Lorelei Mucci and Dr. June Chan followed more than 47,000 health professionals over 28 years.

Investigators computed three different dietary scores for each participant: overall plant-based, healthful plant-based, and unhealthy plant-based (see Sidebar). Key results included:

- ◇ Eating a more plant-based diet



How might a plant-based diet be protective against some types of prostate cancer? The authors suggest a number of possible biological effects, such as greater consumption of anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds that are naturally

present in fruits and vegetables.

A plant-based diet may improve outcomes among patients with prostate cancer

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Clinical trials of plant-based diets have focused on two groups of men with prostate cancer: those with low-risk disease on active surveillance, and those with biochemical recurrence after initial treatment. For example, the Prostate Cancer Lifestyle Trial randomized 93 men with low-risk prostate cancer to a one-year intensive lifestyle program including a very low-fat vegan diet, regular exercise, stress management, and a support group. Patients in the control group received usual care. After one year, patients in the intervention group had significantly lower PSA levels vs the control group. After two years, significantly fewer patients in the intervention group had gone on to have prostate cancer treatment (2) vs in the control group (13). Patients in the lifestyle intervention group also experienced

other health benefits, such as reduced weight, cholesterol, and perceived stress.



Trials of a plant-based diet (coupled with stress reduction) in patients with recurrent prostate cancer showed an increase in PSA doubling time, which

may suggest less aggressive cancer. These studies were small, with short follow-up time. While these findings are promising, more research is needed.

What this means for patients: If you've been thinking about adopting a more plant-based diet—maybe swapping out some meat and dairy for more fruits, veggies, and whole grains—these studies suggest that may help lower your risk of certain types of prostate cancer, or of prostate cancer progression. Consult your doctor or a nutritionist about any major dietary changes, especially if you're in treatment or have other health conditions.

By BECKY CAMPBELL

July 18, 2022

Source: www.pcf.org/c/plant-based-diets-and-prostate-cancer/

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Groups want timely, accessible data on cancer to help improve outcomes

Two groups are calling for better data collection, including on race, ethnicity and end-of-life care, to help improve cancer outcomes across the country.

The Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer say in a report that other gaps in the data include risk factors to guide cancer prevention efforts, patients' experiences and social



determinants of health.

The groups also want patients' primary

carefiles to be linked with lab and treatment data so care teams can easily and quickly access test results and documents on cancer, which they say is the leading cause of death in Canada.

They say more data would help researchers contribute to clinical trials, and administrators could better plan for

resources, especially in underserved communities.

The report calls on Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information to work with provinces and territories to build and maintain a system that allows data to be analyzed for various demographics.

They plan to release more details on a Canada-wide data strategy later this year following further consultation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to help develop practices for culturally safe care and the governance of health data.

Nathan Denette / THE CANADIAN PRESS

July 18, 2023.

https://www.thestar.com/life/health-wellness/groups-want-timely-accessible-data-on-cancer-to-help-improve-outcomes/article_1e64474a-e474-59d4-84ae-9795882039b7.html

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An emerging prostate cancer surgical alternative shows promise in older men

Like a lumpectomy for breast cancer, this treatment, which is called focal therapy, spares healthy tissues.

Think of prostate cancer surgery and what likely comes to mind is a radical prostatectomy, which is an operation to remove the entire prostate gland along with the seminal vesicles that produce semen. However, men with localized prostate cancer — meaning cancer that is still confined to the prostate — have another surgical option.

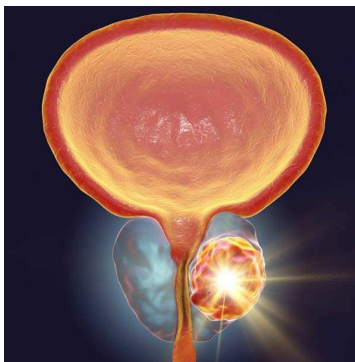
Called focal therapy, this alternative procedure treats only the cancerous part of the prostate and leaves the rest of the gland intact. The aim is to remove "clinically significant" tumor tissue, cancer that would spread further if it wasn't treated at all. While there is a small risk that some cancer may be left behind after treatment, focal therapy also has the benefit of minimizing risks for erectile dysfunction and urinary incontinence, which are both potential side effects of radical prostatectomy. And growing evidence shows it can be an effective strategy.

Last year, researchers reported that 1,379 men treated with focal therapy or radical prostatectomy had similar cancer outcomes after five years of follow-up. The men were 66 years old on average, and doctors treated them with a technique called high-intensity focused ultrasound, or HIFU. This approach destroys cancer by subjecting it to high-energy ultrasound waves that heat tumors to high temperatures.

Now, findings from the same research team show that focal therapy is also an effective option for older men with prostate cancer. During this newer study, researchers assessed outcomes for 649 men ages 70 and above who were treated at 11 sites in the United Kingdom. Two-thirds of the men had

cancer with an intermediate risk of further spread, and the remaining third had more aggressive, high-risk prostate tumors that are more dangerous.

All the men were treated with HIFU or a different type of focal therapy, cryotherapy, that destroys cancer by freezing it. The primary goal of the study was to assess "failure-free survival," whereby treated men avoid a prostate cancer death, or worsening disease leading to further interventions.



What the data reveals

After follow-up durations ranging up to five years, 96% of the men were still alive, and the overall failure-free survival rate was 82%. No differences in outcomes between HIFU- and cryotherapy-treated men were reported. The men with high-risk cancer had worse outcomes: their failure-free survival rate was 75%, compared to 86% among men with intermediate-risk disease.

But 88% of the high-risk men and 90% of the intermediate-risk men also avoided hormonal therapy, a treatment that — because of its side effects — most men don't want. The authors concluded that focal therapy may be an acceptable treatment that controls prostate cancer in older men as well as radical prostatectomy does.

It's important to note that complications

from focal therapy are possible. For instance, a small percentage of men in the new study developed urinary tract infections, and some also wound up with urinary retention, a treatable condition that occurs when the bladder can't empty completely. The authors didn't assess functional outcomes after surgery, such as erectile dysfunction or urinary incontinence. But mounting evidence from other studies shows that long-term urinary incontinence after focal therapy is very rare.

The findings are encouraging, but Harvard experts emphasize that more evidence with focal therapy is still needed. "Despite promising results such as those reported in this and other studies, long-term outcomes (e.g., 10 to 15 years or more) following focal therapy must still be assessed to fully determine how this treatment option compares to radical prostatectomy or radiation therapy," says Dr. Boris Gershman, urologist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and an assistant professor at Harvard Medical School focusing on prostate and bladder cancer. "Additional studies can also help us refine the types of prostate cancer that focal therapy is most appropriate for, and which types should be given therapies that treat the entire prostate gland."

By Charlie Schmidt, Editor, Harvard Medical School Annual Report on Prostate Diseases

August 9, 2023

Reviewed by Marc B. Garnick, MD, Editor in Chief, Harvard Medical School Annual Report on Prostate Diseases; Editorial Advisory Board Member, Harvard Health Publishing

Source: www.health.harvard.edu/blog/prostate-cancer-an-emerging-surgical-alternative-shows-promise-in-older-men-202308092963

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Promising new approach targets aggressive type of prostate cancer

Researchers have uncovered the molecular mechanism that drives an aggressive form of prostate cancer that doesn't respond well to typical treatments. Importantly, they also identified a drug currently undergoing clinical trials that can potentially treat it.

Adenocarcinoma, or glandular prostate cancer, is the most common type of prostate cancer. One first-line treatment for advanced prostate cancer is hormone therapy to block the effects of androgen in the body, which can help prevent prostate cancer cells from growing. However, for some men, treatment can cause the cancer to morph into a more aggressive form called neuroendocrine prostate cancer (NEPC), the most lethal prostate cancer there is and one that has no definitive treatment.

In a new study, researchers from Michigan Medicine at the University of Michigan expanded on their previous work, which identified a key driver of cell growth in prostate cancer, and discovered the pathway that leads to the development of NEPC. More importantly, they identified a way to treat it.

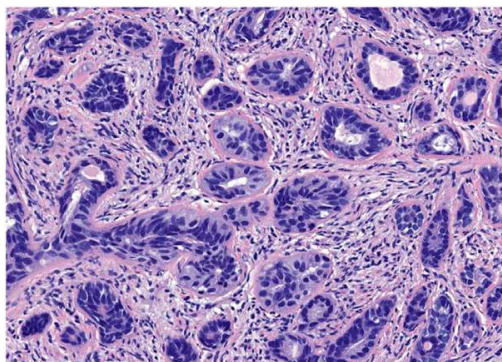
The process by which adenocarcinomas shift to NEPC is known as lineage plasticity, a kind of cellular reprogramming where cells transition from one committed pathway to another as a means of bypassing therapy. The mechanisms driving lineage plasticity are not well understood, but what is known is that once it occurs, few treatment options exist.

“Our prior work demonstrated that approximately 15-20% of patients whose tumors start growing despite newer hormonal treatments will lose the adenocarcinoma program and take on other identifies, including one called

neuroendocrine prostate cancer,” said Joshi Alumkal, corresponding author of the study.

That prior work identified that the protein lysine-specific demethylase 1 (LSD1) was important for the survival of prostate adenocarcinoma tumors. In the current study, the researchers wanted to see whether LSD1 was also involved in NEPC.

Examination of tissues from patients with metastatic prostate cancer showed that LSD1 was more highly expressed in NEPC tumors than in adenocarcinoma tumors. To determine the importance of LSD1, the researchers removed LSD1 from cell models of NEPC and found that the cells grew less well, demonstrating that LSD1 was essential for the survival of these aggressive cells.



They then tested whether blocking the interaction of LSD1 with other proteins could inhibit its actions.

“Ultimately, we found that a class of drugs – allosteric inhibitors – that block protein-protein interactions was much more effective in stopping LSD1 and slowing the growth of cancer cells,” said Anbarasu Kumaraswamy, the study's lead author.

Figuring out how LSD1 works led the researchers to identify key genes and molecular pathways controlled by

LSD1 in NEPC. They discovered that LSD1 turned off the gene TP53, which provides instructions for making a tumor-suppressing protein, p53. If LSD1 was inhibited in cancer cell models, p53 was reactivated and tumor growth was suppressed.

“That cell lines lacking p53 were less sensitive to LSD1 inhibition gives us strong clues about the importance of p53 reactivation for the anti-tumor effects of LSD1 inhibition,” said Alumkal.

The next step was to test the effectiveness of a known LSD1 inhibitor. The researchers used mouse models to test the effectiveness of seclidemstat, a drug that's currently undergoing phase 1 clinical trials as a treatment for sarcoma, a cancer that starts in the bones and connective tissue. In every case, the drug blocked NEPC tumor growth and in several tumors there was complete regression.

The researchers say their findings suggest a potential treatment for patients with NEPC and other cancers.

“The fact that the drug we found is in clinical testing gives us hope that we might be able to develop clinical trials targeting LSD1 in aggressive prostate cancers in the near term,” Alumkal said. “These findings could also lead to a more generalizable approach to reactivating p53 function in other cancers.”

The study was published in the journal JCI Insight.

August 14, 2023

By Paul McClure

Source: Michigan Medicine –
University of Michigan

<https://newatlas.com/medical/promising-new-approach-targets-aggressive-prostate-cancer/>

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FUTURE MEETINGS 2023

- 18 Oct Dr. Shelley Turner M.D.
Medical Director, EKOSI Health
"Cannabis role in treatment and management of prostate cancer"
- 15 Nov Xmas potluck No speaker Just music and food
- 20 Dec No meeting in December.
Regular meetings begin in January 2024

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please contact Jos Borsa at number listed above