



The Prostate Cancer Controversy - What's A Man to Do?

By Ken Malik, PAF Founder & Executive Director

PROSTATE AWARENESS FOUNDATION

Integrative Paths to Healing

Prostate cancer has become the most controversial issue in men's health. This year alone over 200,000 men will be diagnosed with the disease and 30,000 men will die from it. But the death rate for prostate cancers is one of the lowest of all the cancers, with only about 3% of men dying from it. There is a time and a place for everything and sometimes aggressive treatment is necessary. But for most men, early stage prostate cancer exhibits no symptoms. Sorry to say, many men with early stage prostate cancer are being treated for a disease that will never kill them. The conventional treatments have a high incidence of recurrence and side effects and in most instances the treatments are more harmful than the disease itself!

The PSA Blood test for Diagnosing Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is an age related phenomenon, the older you are the more likely you will have it. The PSA test was introduced in the early 1990's, and is now losing favor as a diagnostic tool in the detection of prostate cancer. The test has led to gross over treatment of a disease that will not harm most men. In fact, it was never approved by the FDA as a diagnostic tool, but as a monitoring device for men already diagnosed with the disease. The prostate biopsy is still the only way one can truly tell if you have prostate cancer. But there are many new tests in development and some are now available on a limited basis, none are covered by insurance. Their object is to help determine which men with early stage disease are likely to progress without treatment and which men do not need treatment, at least not initially. Since all of these tests are new, it remains to be seen if any are the final answer.

The Great Prostate Hoax

In a new book called *The Great Prostate Hoax*, the dark side of American medicine and its relationship with "Big Pharma" is discussed in detail. It's was written by Richard Albin, PhD, the scientist who first isolated the PSA molecule. He subtitled the book "*How big medicine hijacked the PSA test and caused a public health disaster*". He begins with an apology to the millions of healthy men who underwent routine PSA screening for prostate cancer, were diagnosed with early stage prostate cancer and underwent unnecessary interventions. Health professionals, specializing in prostate cancer need to be more forthcoming with men about early stage prostate cancer and the fact that in most cases the disease can be monitored rather than treated aggressively right away. There is currently a campaign on to change the name of early stage prostate cancer to IDLE (Indolent Lesions of Epithelial Origin) these cells are sometimes called A-typical cells. These "fence sitting" cells have not decided what to do.

The fear of the word cancer makes many men decide on aggressive treatment, even when not necessary.

What's A Man To Do?

The Prostate Awareness Foundation has advised men for many years about the limitations of the PSA test. Until a better test comes along: establish a baseline PSA value at around 40 years old. Then, don't worry about your initial PSA value, every man seems to have their own ideal PSA. Watch the velocity over time by having the test done yearly during an annual physical. Many doctors are now recommending an MRI prior to getting a biopsy as another part of the diagnostic process.



Ken Malik is the founder and executive director of the Prostate Awareness Foundation. He is a 21-year veteran of prostate cancer. His disease has not progressed, nor has he undergone conventional therapy. Ken uses the PAF formula for good prostate health, including a strict low fat non-dairy diet, regular exercise, stress management techniques and a zest for life.

The Prostate Awareness Foundation hosts a monthly discussion group in San Francisco on the 1st Thursday each month, and in Santa Rosa the 2nd Tuesday of each month. PAF services also include a mentor program and weekly hikes in Sonoma and Marin County. All PAF services are free of charge. Call 415-675-5661 or visit the PAF website for details at www.prostateawarenessfoundation.org.