



Prostate Cancer
Foundation
of Australia

PROSTATE SUPPORTER

The newsletter of the Prostate Cancer Support
and Action Groups of South Australia

April 2008

<http://www.pcagsa.org.au>

Message hits a rural audience

A recent event in Port Lincoln helped put prostate cancer awareness in the public spotlight, as Dean Wall reports.

THE ELDERS group of companies – a prominent corporate sponsor of the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia – opened a new office block and merchandise store in Port Lincoln on March 28, and the launch proved to be a valuable promotional event for heightening cancer awareness.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was performed by Glenn McGrath, the recently retired Australian fast bowler who was representing the McGrath Foundation for Breast Cancer research.

As one of the two PCFA Ambassadors in SA, and also Chairman of its affiliated Prostate Cancer Action Group, I was invited to attend the opening, where the local SES presented a money-raising barbecue and raffle, with funds being split evenly between the McGrath Foundation and PCFA.

John Phillis of the Blundstone footwear company – a supplier to Elders – informed that every item of their stock sold has a flier included of the Angry Anderson Prostate Cancer

awareness initiative “Get Tough on Prostate Cancer”. This is an important initiative to get the message out, particularly to rural men.

FARMOZ, through its southern regional manager Brenton Wilhelm, has invited the PCFA, through the Action Group, to man information tables that are featured at rural field days throughout the state. This seems a golden opportunity to further spread the message of prostate cancer awareness in rural and regional areas.

Fortune also found me talking over a meal with a couple on holidays in Port Lincoln; the lady was very concerned for her brother, who was facing radical prostate cancer surgery within a few weeks. However, talking with someone who had been through this procedure 15 years ago gave her great relief, and she couldn’t wait to let her brother know, hopefully to also help relieve his fears and forebodings. It helped underline the value of spreading the word on prostate cancer treatments, and the work of support groups.



Making a huge health statement

In an effort to increase knowledge about prostate cancer testing among working men, the Prostate Cancer Foundation recently visited Prominent Hill, the Oxiana mine site in South Australia’s far North, to discuss introducing a new prostate cancer awareness project. The PCF’s public relations consultant Karyn Foster met with medical staff and management to outline the project but also toured the mine site. Karyn quickly understood the scale of the operation when she was dwarfed by some of the mine equipment.

in brief...

NATIONAL television coverage of a radical prostatectomy performed on controversial Melbourne football personality John “Sam” Newman has had a telling promotional effect for prostate cancer awareness – especially the importance of blood tests for early cancer screening. Newman, 62, was diagnosed in February and doctors removed the tumour while being filmed for a report on Channel 9’s *60 Minutes* program.

CONTRIBUTIONS to these newsletters from all Support Groups and members are welcomed; send items and images by email to prostate-news@fosterhill.com.au

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia freecall hotline is 1800 22 00 99
or visit the website www.prostate.org.au

**COMING
EVENTS****AWARENESS
MEETING**

The next Awareness Meeting will be held in the RSL Hall, Apex Park, Stirling, at 7.30pm on Wednesday, April 28.

Featured speakers will be Dr James Aspinall (Urologist) and Dr Graham Lyons (Nutrition and prostate cancer expert), with two survivors speaking about their prostate cancer experiences. Men, women and their partners are invited to attend this free presentation, being sponsored by Freemasons of SA & NT, with assistance from Cancer Council SA and Stirling District Hospital.

APRIL MEETING

The next Prostate Cancer Action Group meeting will be held in the upstairs meeting room, Cancer Council SA building, 202 Greenhill Road, Eastwood, at 5.30pm on Tuesday April 8. Enter via the back stairs. New members are most welcome.

• For more information about the Action Group, visit the South Australian Prostate Cancer Action Group's dedicated website, with detailed archives containing its newsletters, at <http://www.pcagsa.org.au>

Crowds come looking for prostate facts

A high-profile event stall has given the Prostate Cancer Action Group another valuable opportunity to spread the good word about cancer awareness, as Trevor Hunt reports.

DESPITE being held in the middle of Adelaide's record heat wave, the fifth annual Man Alive! festival on March 16 attracted a big crowd to the Semaphore foreshore, to observe and learn from a good range of stalls promoting good health for men.

The organisers generously provided power to all stalls so that we could install a fan to help our volunteers feel a little more comfortable. However, stalls began to close down by early afternoon, as people wilted from the incessant heat. Our intrepid crew held out until near closing time.

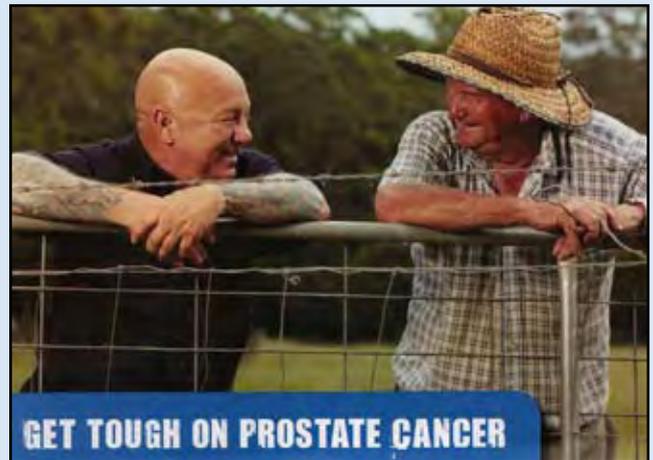
The Action Group was kept busy with constant queries about prostate cancer. We registered 80 genuine inquiries and dealt with many more people who wanted to check out the stall, or just to have a chat about their disease.

There was quite an emphasis on prostate cancer at Man Alive! this year, including a talk by Professor Willis Marshall.

Having attended all five Man Alive! festivals, people now seem to be looking for the Prostate Cancer Group – making it clear that it's important for us to maintain our presence at such events..

CONSUMER GUIDE

DR CAROLE Pinnock, convenor of a working party



Blundstone Boots has taken a tough stand on prostate cancer by including an informative flyer with all of its items sold, based on a campaign featuring singer Angry Anderson, as explained in Dean Wall's Page 1 report of this newsletter.

compiling consumer guidelines for managing advanced prostate cancer, contacted the Action Group for comment on the booklet's proposed chapter headings. These were reviewed at the group's March meeting. Suggestions were made about possible changes and inclusions, which have been returned to Dr Pinnock; in turn, she thanked members for their input.

**CANCER CARE CENTRE
AT RISK OF CLOSING**

MANY prostate cancer patients and survivors have received assistance and advice from the Cancer Care Centre at Unley – now it has come to our attention that this highly valued organisation has fallen

on hard times. To remain viable and maintain a reasonable level of assistance to cancer sufferers, the centre urgently needs at least \$100,000. All donations are most welcome, with amounts of \$2 or more being tax deductible.

**POTENTIAL SUPPORT
GROUP SITES**

POTENTIAL sites for future awareness meetings was discussed at the group's March meeting, with two sites identified in rural areas. It appears there may be interest in establishing a support group in one location. More research is required before we can announce these towns, and our inquiries are continuing.

Prostate Cancer Support and Awareness: ADELAIDE GROUP

COMING EVENTS FOR 2008

The Adelaide Group meets on the third Monday of each month, in the Park View Room of the Fullarton Park Centre, 411 Fullarton Rd, Fullarton.

Monday April 21st
Guest speaker will be Ms Belle McCaleb, naturopath, nutritionist and herbalist at the Cancer Care Centre Naturopathy Clinic, providing nutritional medicine for prostate cancer support.

Monday May 19th
Guest speaker will be Dr Mary Brooksbank, director of the Palliative Care Unit at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Monday June 16th
Guest Frances Combe, President of the SA Voluntary Euthanasia Society, will speak about medical wills, health wishes, voluntary euthanasia as an option of last resort, and the prospect of this being enacted in SA with defined safeguards.

Monday July 21st
General Discussion evening concerning Prostate Cancer.

• For more information, visit the Adelaide Group's dedicated website at www.psaadelaide.org or contact group president Phil Davis (phone 8263 2217), or secretary Ian Fisk (phone 8296 3350).

The need to care for both mind and body

The Adelaide Group has been informed of unexpected ills that can stem from cancer diagnosis, as Phil Davis reports.

ONE in four people in the western world have a problem during their lives with anxiety, according to Judy Brookstrom, a therapist with the Panic Anxiety Disorder Association.

Addressing members at the Adelaide group meeting in March, Ms Brookstrom said low to moderate levels of anxiety are quite normal and increase alertness and performance. However, people experiencing continuous or recurring episodes of heightened anxiety recognise this as being irrational and unrealistic, but feel powerless to manage its symptoms.

Panic and Anxiety Disorders can be associated with a build-up of stress, or a major life stress. One example is being diagnosed with a life-threatening or serious illness, or even learning about the diagnosis of a partner, family member or friend.

Symptoms of an anxiety can include racing heartbeat, palpitations, breathing difficulties, dizziness, chest pain, headaches, stomach upsets, hot and cold flushes, shaking, diarrhea, loss of bladder control, loss of libido, loss of appetite, excessive perspiration, exhaustion, a sense of disassociation, feeling detached, irrational thoughts, fear and an overwhelming sense of doom.

Secondary conditions can also arise from untreated or ineffective treatment of an anxiety disorder, including depression, agoraphobia, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide.

As a community, we more readily seek professional assistance for a physical illness but are more reticent to seek help for anxiety problems. Often sufferers wrongly try to self diagnose, though Ms Brookstrom emphasised that it is imperative to seek professional medical help, as treatment is readily available.

The Panic Anxiety Association provides high quality support and education through free information sessions. The next session is on Thursday April 17, from 7pm to 8.30pm. Phone 8227 1044 for more details.

CAN YOU HELP?

One Adelaide Group member has been diagnosed with prostate cancer and leukemia, and he would like to speak to any other member who has been, or is in a similar circumstance. Please contact Phil Davis (Ph: 8263 2217; email classic100@bigpond.com) if you can provide assistance.

NEW MEMBERS

The Adelaide group welcomes two new members – Peter who is considering Low Dose Brachytherapy, and John, who has an elevated PSA.



Vale Joe Bridges

Sadly, Joe Bridges – a valued support group member – passed away on March 21. Joe lost his wife to cancer and suffered prostate cancer; he spoke to the Adelaide group about his story, and attended meetings at the City of Onkaparinga Prostate Cancer Support Group.

The past few years saw Joe devote himself to raising funds for cancer research, through boxing events and a walk from Adelaide to Melbourne. (A four-page report is archived on our website, and featured in the group's April 2007 newsletter). Joe's funeral was held at Centennial Park on Friday March 28. His son Geoff reviewed his father's life, especially his passion for boxing. Joe was also the subject of a recent article in *The Advertiser* sport section.

City of Onkaparinga Prostate Cancer Support Group

COMING EVENTS FOR 2008**APRIL 2 MEETING:**

Guest speaker is Graeme Goodings, Channel 7 personality and cancer survivor. This meeting will be held in a larger room behind the cafeteria at Noarlunga Community Hospital.

MAY 7 MEETING:

Guest speaker Cynthia Edwards from the Cancer Council SA will talk about Bowel Cancer.

• For more information, visit the City of Onkaparinga Support Group's dedicated website at www.pcsog.org

• Special thanks is extended to the City of Onkaparinga Support Group sponsors: Southern Primary Health Woodcroft, Port Noarlunga-Christies Beach RSL Sub Branch, Thaxted Park Golf Club Inc, The Original Open Market, and to all who provide valuable support to our group – especially the City of Onkaparinga Council.

Information spreading throughout the South

Group President John Shields says information days are strong promotional events in the southern community.

INFORMATION days have long been a feature of the Onkaparinga Prostate Cancer Support Group's activities in our local community, and they remain important ways of heightening public awareness of prostate cancer, while also shining a light on support services available to prostate cancer sufferers.

The next information day will be held at the Seaford Shopping Centre, near the corner of Commercial Rd and Griffiths Drive at Seaford, on Wednesday, April 30.

Members of the support group will be at an information stand near the entrance to Foodland, throughout the day. Any help that you could give by spending time at the stand during the day will be appreciated.

Further information days are planned for this year at the Woodcroft, Aldinga, and The Hub shopping centres.

BARBECUE CONFIRMED

BRIAN FOREMAN has confirmed that the

Onkaparinga Support Group's mid-year barbecue will be held on Sunday, June 8 at the Willunga Lions Saleyard. Final arrangements for this event will be made at the support group's May meeting.

NEW ROLL-UP BANNER

WE ARE awaiting imminent delivery of a new roll-up banner from EZY Banner. It will be good to have a professionally-made banner to place outside the door at each meeting, and to advertise our group on information days that we conduct in the community.

CARER RECOGNITION

IT WAS most unfortunate that the arranged guest speaker for our March meeting, Pam Lawton, did not attend. We were not advised that Pam is no longer with Carers SA, and it seems that it will be difficult to obtain another speaker from the Carers Association SA.

I believe this incident gave us pause to reflect on the work undertaken by our wives and partners. They are truly our

number one source of support, and are an essential part of the success of our Support Group.

As the people directly affected by our prostate cancer diagnosis and the after-effects of treatment, our own great carers not only deserve high praise, but also genuine recognition and support from the Carers' Association of SA.

It has been my ambition since the support group started that our ladies should get together at each group meeting to conduct their own meeting – even if only at supper time – and I will continue to work towards realising that goal.

PREVIOUS MEETING

AT OUR March meeting, the support group had a brief but interesting Round Robin discussion. Vice President Malcolm Ellis (also President of The Association of Prostate Cancer Support Groups SA) said a visit to one of the Country Support Groups will be on the agenda for the next Association meeting.

Research findings and news items from around the world ... Submitted by Trevor Hunt

Early PSA test able to predict future prostate cancers

SWEDISH researchers found PSA levels retrospectively calculated from blood taken from 22,277 men between 1974 and 1986 reflected their risk of being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer up to 25 years later.

By 1999, 498 men had been diagnosed with prostate cancer, with 161 having locally advanced or metastatic cancers. Two thirds of advanced cancer cases occurred in men in the top 20 per cent of PSA levels.

The finding suggested the possibility of using an early PSA test to risk-stratify patients so that men at highest risk have the most intensive screening efforts.

Associate Professor Phillip Stricker, Director of the St Vincent's Prostate

Cancer Centre in Sydney, predicted that "in the future we will be doing an initial PSA probably closer to 40 that will stratify the population into a higher-risk and lower-risk category".

Source: Medical Observer, February 29, 2008.

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Mitcham Prostate Cancer Support Group

Speaker sheds light on advance in computer chip technology

MITCHAM group is already enjoying good support in 2008, with its second meeting for the year on March 27 attracting 30 people, including several first time visitors who had heard of the group through their health professionals or via new flyers that have been distributed.

The evening's guest speaker, Dr Peter Sutherland, gave an excellent power point presentation on prostate cancer. He had recently attended a conference on computer chip technology in surgery, conducted in Orlando, Florida – with the DaVinci robotic surgery technique used in Adelaide being a prime example of this development.

Peter described the prostate as something which can provide sexual joy to men in their younger life but can turn things around as age advances, proving to be the most common cause of cancer for men.

In Australia prostate cancer causes up to 3000 death per year, with 12,000 to 15,000 new cases diagnosed each year and up to 100,000 men being treated at any one time.

Risk factors were discussed, including age, family history, race and diet, and the fact an "average" 50-year-old man has a 10 per cent chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Dr Sutherland also discussed PSA and DRE screening, and lamented the fact that no organised program for prostate cancer screening exists.

Perhaps men don't shout loud enough to demand one.

Comments were made on things besides cancer that can increase PSA levels. Dr Sutherland also emphasised the importance of having a DRE; he explained that 25 per cent of men who have abnormal DRE results are diagnosed with prostate cancer.

After explaining the association of Gleason scores to the aggressiveness of prostate cancer, Dr Sutherland emphasised the importance of men considering all options available in treatments for prostate cancer.

He also screened a short video presentation of the DaVinci robotic surgery technique, explaining the procedures and associated benefits, before fielding many questions from the audience on prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment.

IN other business pertinent to the Mitcham group, key executive positions still need to be filled in the wake of the group's February (AGM) meeting – a Deputy Chairperson and a Promotions Officer (to take the pressure off Jeff Roberts, who is doing an excellent job along with many other tasks, and needs capable assistance). We hope volunteers will emerge soon to fill these important roles.

• **For further information, phone Mitcham group chair Terry Harbour on 8271 0513, Jeff Roberts on 8277 3424 or visit our website www.psamitcham.org**

COMING EVENTS

THE next monthly meeting of the Mitcham Support Group will be held on Thursday April 24, in the Colonel Light Gardens RSL Clubrooms, at 4 Prince George Parade, Colonel Light Gardens.

Guest Speaker Dr Samantha Pillay, Consultant Urologist at Calvary Hospital, will speak on treating incontinence after prostate surgery.



Dr Pillay is the only female practising urologist in South Australia, coming from a family of medicos – her father is a general practitioner and her sister is a cardio-thoracic nurse.

She commenced her urology training in 1998 and after completing training undertook specialist studies in urinary incontinence and bladder dysfunction, completing her post fellowship training in female urology.

• *For more information, visit the Mitcham Group's dedicated website at www.psamitcham.org*

Barossa & Gawler Prostate Cancer Support Group

COMING EVENT

Tuesday April 22

Meeting from 2pm to 4pm at the home of Margaret and Robert Reimann, 29 George St, Greenock. The meeting will feature guest speaker Vikki Boulton, a nutritionist who will talk about focusing on nutrition to fight cancer. Members are asked to bring a plate of afternoon tea.

• *For more information about the Barossa & Gawler Group, contact Alan Hall at jalful2@bigpond.com*

McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group

Guest speaker prompts enthusiastic discussion

A HIGHLY educational presentation by local area GP Dr Graham Lovell – about diet, exercise and the importance of regular check-ups – provided an informative highlight of the March meeting for the McLaren Districts Prostate Cancer Support Group.

Members readily became a part of Dr Lovell's presentation as they told of their own experiences that related to various topics under discussion. This had the effect of allowing the presentation to become a two-way discourse,

with questions and answers promoting further discussion and comment.

Most members participated in the discussions, including new members, and I'm sure everybody left the meeting more informed on several important health matters relating to prostate cancer treatment.

During the meeting, members discussed the possibility of expanding the scope of the McLaren District group, to include men's health problems and concerns in general, while

still maintaining an emphasis on prostate cancer. Given the limited potential audience of the geographical area currently covered by the group, it was agreed that this would be in everybody's interest.

It was noted that this slight but significant change in direction would certainly provide for a wider variety of speakers, making meetings a more informative and interesting event for everyone who attends.

Bryan Hearn
Group organiser

COMING EVENT

Tuesday April 24

The McLaren Districts group will next meet in the Administration building at the rear of the McLaren Vale & Districts Hospital, at 7pm on Thursday April 24. Anyone planning to attend should contact Bryan Hearn on 8323 7924 or 0410 539 274 to confirm these details and their attendance.

Port Pirie Prostate Cancer Support Group

Screening message gets understood

PORT Pirie support group meetings – held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Port Pirie Tennis Centre – have proved to be of significant interest, with the March event promoted through the general community. It attracted a strong audience keen to learn more about cancer issues.

The guest speaker was Marita Aldridge from the

Cancer Council of SA, who spoke about efforts to reduce the risk of bowel cancer, and the national bowel cancer screening program.

Marita showed a power point presentation and had a sample bowel cancer testing kit on hand to demonstrate the ease of collecting. She also provided statistics on the number of free kits sent out as part of the national screening

program and the response and detection rate of faecal occult blood. Men responded less than women but had a higher positive result rate.

The message for men about bowel and prostate screening is to take charge of your health and get screened, because screening saves lives.

Nicola Champion,
Port Pirie Cancer Support
Palliative Care Coordinator



Port Pirie support group members Tom Skewes and Charlie Cairney with guest speaker Marita Aldridge.

Dietary decisions can make a decisive difference

MEN who regularly consume a lot of meat, takeaway food, white bread and full-strength beer almost double their risk of developing prostate cancer, according to a study on how long-term diet affects risk of this disease.

Increased risk from a poor diet could stretch back 10 years or more, suggesting

that even men in their 20s and 30s can determine their later risk of the disease by what they eat and drink.

Researchers from the WA Institute for Medical Research and the University of WA found a main culprit in prostate cancer risk was a diet high in red meat, processed meat (bacon), fast food, beer, full-cream

dairy foods and refined cereals (white bread).

Men who regularly ate this type of diet had an 82 per cent increased risk of developing prostate cancer, regardless of other factors that are known to influence cancer risk, such as being overweight or not exercising. In men who ate these types of food

only occasionally, their increased risk of the disease was not significant.

Institute Associate Professor Lin Fritschi said the findings sent a clear message to men – especially young men – that what they regularly eat and drink can affect their risk of developing prostate cancer.

PSA riddle: watchful waiting or vaccinating?

Researchers in California are making progress on a vaccine to prevent prostate cancer development.

RESEARCHERS at the University of Southern California have developed a prostate cancer vaccine that prevented development of cancer in 90 per cent of young mice genetically predestined to develop the disease.

In the February issue of *Cancer Research*, researchers suggest the same strategy might work for men with rising levels of Prostate Specific Antigen.

“By giving early vaccination, we gave these mice life-long protection against a disease they were destined to have,” says lead investigator Martin Kast, a professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

At present, men with rising PSA levels but no other signs of cancer are advised to practice “watchful waiting” without actual treatment until signs of prostate cancer appear.

Kast believes that vaccination instead of watchful waiting could change the course of the disease. Vaccines currently used in testing are designed to treat men whose cancers are advanced and unresponsive to therapy, and Kast says results have offered limited clinical benefit. Early vaccination would target the precancerous state with the aim of preventing cancer from developing.

Preventive vaccine is designed

to mount an immune response against prostate stem cell antigen (PSCA), the protein target of some therapeutic vaccines under development.

PSCA, a membrane protein, is over-expressed in about one-third of early-stage prostate cancers, but expression ramps up in all prostate tumors as they grow and advance.

PSCA is also expressed at low-levels in normal prostate gland tissue, as well as in the bladder, colon, kidney and stomach.

USC researchers created a prime-boost vaccination scheme using two kinds of vaccines and tested it in eight-week-old mice that were genetically altered to develop prostate cancer later in life.

The first vaccine delivered a fragment of DNA that coded for PSCA, thus producing an influx of PSCA protein to alert the immune system. The booster shot, given two weeks later, used a modified horse virus to deliver the PSCA gene.

“Confronting the immune system in two different ways forces it to mount a strong response,” says Kast.

In the experimental group, all 20 mice developed very small tumors that did not progress and only two developed prostate cancer at the end of one year; by contrast, all control mice died of the disease.

“There were tiny nodules of prostate cancer in the mice that were surrounded by an army of immune system cells,” says Kast. “The vaccination turned the cancer into a chronic, manageable disease.”

Kast says the vaccination strategy also works with other antigens.

The researchers tried another prostate cancer membrane target and found that after 18 months, 65 per cent of experimental mice were still alive; of those that died, the suspected cause was old age.

Investigators found that treated mice did not develop autoimmune disease, a side effect that could develop if the vaccine had also targeted PSCA expression in normal cells.

“Theoretically, the vaccine could produce a response in any tissue that expresses the antigen, but the fact that PSCA is expressed in such low levels in normal tissue may prevent that complication,” says Kast.

“With just two shots, the vaccine will prime immune cells to be on the lookout for any cell that over-expresses PSCA.”

Studies in humans are now needed to ensure autoimmunity does not develop.

Source: American Association for Cancer Research website <http://www.aacr.org>

Genetic links offer new hope of early detection

GENE SLEUTHS say they have identified more than 10 new genetic links to prostate cancer, two of which will be included in a new diagnostic test aimed at identifying men at risk from the disease.

Working separately, scientists gathered in three international consortiums crunched through genetic data garnered from blood samples provided by thousands of volunteers.

Men with prostate cancer had a strong tendency to have telltale variants in locations on chromosomes 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 19, and on the X chromosome for gender, the scientists reported in the February issue of *Nature Genetics*.

They concluded that men with close relatives who have had prostate cancer are twice as likely to develop the disease as counterparts with no recent family history of this ailment. However, until now, only a few genes have been associated with the disease and these accounted for only a small percentage of potential cases.

Source: *The Age*, February 11, 2008.

Sling surgery could stop incontinence incidents

A new, minimally invasive male sling has been designed to aid incontinence after prostate surgery, as urologist Dr Samantha Pillay reports.

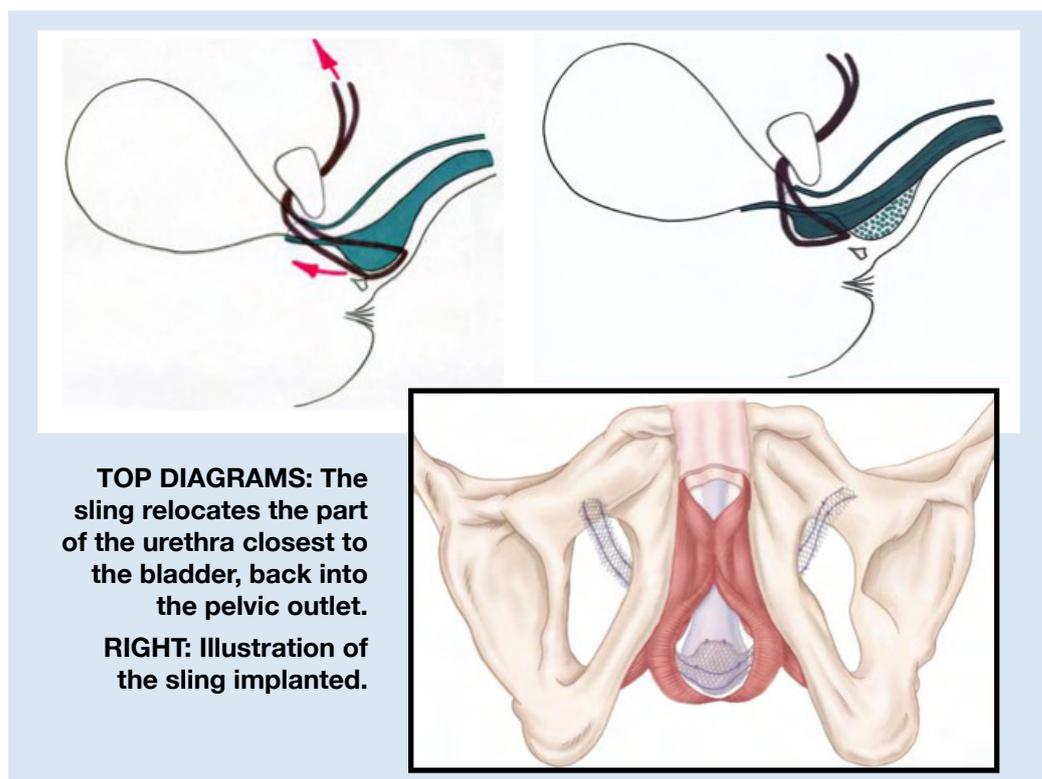
STRESS incontinence can be an unfortunate result of prostate surgery in men, especially after radical prostatectomy for prostate cancer.

The gold standard treatment is implantation of an artificial urinary sphincter, which is a three-part device requiring the patient to operate the device via a pump implanted in the scrotum every time they need to empty their bladder.

Another option is injectable agents such as carbon, collagen or silicone to narrow the urethra, but although these are minimally invasive and used successfully in female incontinence, the results in men have proved to be poor.

With many valuable lessons learned from the treatment of incontinence in women, recent designs of minimally-invasive slings have evolved, aiming to bridge the unfortunately wide gap that exists between less invasive injectables and the more invasive artificial sphincter.

The new Advance sling



TOP DIAGRAMS: The sling relocates the part of the urethra closest to the bladder, back into the pelvic outlet.

RIGHT: Illustration of the sling implanted.

shows promise. Developed by Dr C Gozzi and Dr P Rehder from Austria, inserting this smart device requires only a small incision in the perineum and a small exit wound in each groin.

Doctors Gozzi and Rehder visited Australia in 2006 to train a handful of surgeons in this procedure.

The ideal patient for this type of sling is a man with mild to moderate urinary incontinence, using approximately five pads or less a day. Those with more severe incontinence probably still enjoy the best results from the implementation of an artificial sphincter.

Patients who have had

radiotherapy or who have a lot of scarring of the urethra from strictures may also not be suitable for slings.

The Advance sling has advantages over the sphincter due to it requiring a shorter operation, involving less pain and a quicker recovery, with usually only one night in hospital required.

The sling procedure is effective immediately, where as a sphincter is not activated until six weeks after surgery, and a sling does not require the patient to activate a device when urinating. (Patients who have a sling fitted are still recommended to avoid straining or lifting for at least

six weeks.) All available treatments may considerably improve this debilitating problem, although there is no guarantee that they can get a patient completely dry in every situation. Many patients improve to a level with minimal leakage of either none or only one pad a day.

As the Advance sling is a new procedure, published studies are small and more information is needed from larger clinical trials.

Still, early results are promising. Urologists can discuss various treatment options and help sufferers to decide which is the best treatment for them.