

PROSTATE CANCER ACTION GROUP (S.A.) INC.

Affiliated with
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia



ABN 26 499 349 142

NEWSLETTER

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Group. This Group does not offer medical or other professional advice. Articles printed in this newsletter are presented only as a means of sharing information and opinions with members, with the object of promoting stimulation for independent thought and analysis, and sharing the experiences of others. It is not intended to recommend any particular treatment or product in this publication. Each person should assess the relevance to him/her self, and any person acting on information in this newsletter takes the responsibility for any such action. It is important that any person should consult with his/her health professional before making any decision about treatments, and all articles should be read in this context.

APRIL 2004

INTRODUCING THE FASTEST GROWING WATER SPORT IN THE WORLD **PEEBALL IS HERE**

Peeball, an innovative fundraising and awareness-raising tool for prostate cancer, was launched at the Telstra Dome on 22nd March.

The amazing game of Skill, Power, Speed and Endurance played by gentlemen in urinals.

Developed in the UK by Matthew Sweetapple, Peeball is a fabulous initiative that uses a combination of sport and humour to capture the imagination of Australian men of all ages, (particularly the younger demographic), and will get our blokes talking about a vital issue for their future health.

Made from sodium bicarbonate and citric acid, Peeballs are biodegradable compacted balls (about the size of large marbles) that are placed in men's urinals to test the strength of urine flow. It is a light-hearted method of raising awareness of a serious issue. **It is not a diagnostic tool for prostate cancer.**

Peeball will be distributed through Carlton and United Breweries' supplied pubs and clubs. They cost \$3.00, of which a minimum of \$1.00 will go to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia, to help fund research, support and awareness programmes.

Each Peeball is sold in an individual package, which highlights facts about prostate cancer, and has instructions on how to play.

Do a wee bit to save Australian Men's lives

MAN ALIVE!

After a rather prolonged gestation period, Man Alive! was delivered on 13th March.

It was a typical Adelaide autumn day at Semaphore, and nobody could have asked for better conditions. We were allocated a good site, facing the stage, at the back of the event site. We had plenty of space to display material, although we did not display all the material that we would normally display at an awareness meeting. This was a deliberate move, to avoid confusing the public.

In keeping with the theme of the event, "Man Alive! Not Necessarily from Mars", the team had constructed a rocket of approximately 1.7m high, and approx. 30cm diameter. Clad in silver, it was eye-catching, and sited well out in front of

our stall. Taking a little bit of license, our message on the rocket was “These men are not from Mars, but down to earth about prostate cancer awareness”.

It is difficult to estimate the size of the crowd, and we do not have any official figures. It could not be said that there was a large crowd, but a steady stream of people, for most of the day. We were certainly not rushed, but had a satisfactory number of enquiries, and consider that our presence was worthwhile. It was a long day for some of us, and appreciation is expressed to Theban and Jeff, Coralie, Bill Toop, Ian Fisk, Pat House and Robert Kitto for their work on the day.

To me, one of the most obvious things was that quite a number of men appeared to take evasive action when they saw our site, and they were usually men of the age group that should have been taking more interest in their health. However, that did not stop men of all ages from stopping to talk with us. Some interesting enquiries were received, and I know that several men were advised to phone the Cancer Connect line to request to talk with members of that team. Also, the site allowed us to actively promote the forthcoming Awareness Night in Woodville on March 30th.

All in all, a satisfactory function, and we all had a pleasant day in the refreshing sea air (even a walk along the jetty).

AWARENESS MEETINGS **WESTERN SUBURBS – WOODVILLE**

Tuesday 30th March saw another of our Awareness meetings conducted in the Murree Smith Memorial Hall at Woodville. These suburban meetings appear to draw smaller crowds than in the rural areas, and, on this occasion, we had a crowd of 68 persons. The venue was quite good, with plenty of room, and excellent facilities available.

Dr. Kym Pese addressed the audience on “Aspects of Prostate Cancer”, and was able to include a more detailed section on brachytherapy treatment, having been a member of the team that performed the first such treatment in Adelaide, just prior to this meeting. Others to address the audience were members of our own Group, Gordon Frith, Jack Dorrestyn and Ian Fisk. It was a very full programme, and, judging by the evaluation responses received, well received by the audience.

This was a milestone meeting – it was the tenth such meeting in our ongoing campaign of awareness meetings, and the total number of people who have attended these meetings now exceeds 1,000. It is an achievement of which we can be proud, and all members who have participated must feel some sense of achievement.

On this occasion we received excellent support from Rob Fitzgerald, from D.V.A., who wrote to members living in the City of Charles Sturt area, advising them of the meeting. That action certainly did help to swell the numbers attending. Again, the local press was a significant manner of hearing about the meeting.

It was also noted that 90% of attendees at this meeting were over the age of 60 years, which age group also had the most PSA tests. As another observation, it is my opinion that many of the questions and comments made on the evaluation forms were addressed during the evening, so I can only assume that some people do not listen very attentively. Comment about the use of acronyms is valid, both by our members and the professionals. There was little support for the formation of a prostate cancer support group in the area.

We express our gratitude to the City of Charles Sturt for their grant of \$500 which made this evening possible.

AWARENESS MEETINGS (CONT.) **RIVERLAND (BERRI)**

Much of the foundation work for the proposed Awareness Meeting in the Riverland area has been completed by Secretary Jeff. The meeting will be held in the Berri Club, Old Sturt Highway, Berri, on Tuesday 4th May 2004. Urologist, Dr. James Aspinall will be the keynote speaker for this meeting.

Flyers have been dispatched for distribution in the area, and newspaper advertisements prepared for publication in local newspapers in Renmark, Waikerie, Loxton, and Pinnaroo. Community announcements will be broadcast on regional TV (5 nights, including the weekend), and radio stations in Berri and Renmark. Rob Fitzgerald from DVA will again contact his members about the meeting. Hopefully, radio interviews will also be arranged.

We are receiving assistance with this meeting from the Riverland Prostate Cancer Support group (let's hope that we can help them get some new members) and the Riverland Regional Health Service.

All we need is a worthy crew from our own Group, and a good audience.

AGEING TO PERFECTION

A recent newspaper report advises that the men of the Coonawarra district in the State's South East are to the focus of a men's health project aimed at ensuring that those men age as satisfactorily as their well-known red wine. Developed in conjunction with the South East Regional Health Service, the project is encouraging the mainly male-dominated wine industry to be more concerned about its own personal well-being.

The project will run for three years, and will address such issues as diet, diabetes, exercise, quitting smoking, reduced hearing, cholesterol and high blood pressure. As men involved in the industry spend a considerable amount of time in the open air, there are also issues such as melanomas and other skin damage.

The project has the support of the Coonawarra Vignerons Association, and attempts will be made to encourage wives and other family members to support participants to ensure its success. The project will also be supported by local fund-raising efforts, including raffles at cellar door outlets.

One would think that with the well-known excellence of the local product, and its known anti-oxidant effects, these blokes should be a healthy bunch.

However, two things stand out in the reported version of this worthy project. One is that being a men's health project, the men are expected to raise funds to ensure the sustainability of the project to its finality. Compare this to amount of money that is easily found for any project concerning women's health. These same authorities that want to conduct these types of projects, of course, are always quick to criticize men for lack of attention to their own health – but then want men to finance any project in that field. One would assume that those men, too, have paid their taxes that are supposed to assist with health matters for the whole community, whether male or female.

The other significant point is that there is no mention of prostate health or prostate cancer. Men working in primary industries such as the wine industry often need to handle dangerous chemicals, and it has been shown that those men can be exposed to a higher risk of cancer. To completely ignore the subject of prostate cancer would be dereliction of responsibility to those men, as one would assume that many men working in the wine industry would be in the age group most likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer. If this topic is not among those under consideration, then health authorities should be taken to task. But, then again, some of our members would not be surprised by the omission of prostate cancer from this project, given the indifference to the topic that we experienced on our visit to that area last year.

BIG CROWD AT TASMANIAN MEETING

The Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia recently conducted a rally in Tasmania, with an estimated participation of more than 1,000 people. Jean Dalglish, Regional Health Coordinator North was asked to address a meeting about prostate cancer for the rally participants. She was more than surprised when the meeting attracted an attendance of **over 300 people** – now that's a real crowd!. It was reported that many men expressed gratitude for the meeting, as they claimed that they don't always have access to this type of information. Just another reminder for the Cancer Council Australia and the Government that there is a need for more information about prostate cancer in the community.

SELENIUM AND CANCER

Dr. Larry Clark, and other researchers, at the University of Arizona ran a double blind control trial between 1986 and 1996, and found that 200mcg. of selenium per day reduced cancer mortality by 50 per cent. They involved 1312 participants, half of whom received a replica of selenium and the other half received 200 mcg/day of selenium. After 10 years the results showed a 63% reduction in prostate cancer in those who received selenium, a 58% reduction in colorectal cancer, over 46% reduction in lung cancer and overall 37% fewer cancers. It is recommended as a supplement: 4 drops/day of sodium selenite 50mcg/drop taken in juice.

(Kemp, G. Environmental Disease/Nutritional Therapy in submission to the Victorian Health department about the use of diet, laetrile and other vitamins and trace elements in the treatment of Cancer Pg.6)

ZINC MAY HELP DETECT PROSTATE CANCER

Israeli researchers have suggested that low zinc levels in the prostate may be a marker of prostate cancer. They have uncovered a new relationship between zinc in prostate tissue and prostate-specific antigen, or PSA, in the blood which improves doctors' ability to separate benignly enlarged prostates from cancerous ones. Writing in the Journal of Urology, they say that used together zinc and PSA tests may have a significant impact on the reliable diagnosis of prostate cancer. (A.F.R. 19/2 p.59)

PROTEIN TEST ALLOWS EARLY DETECTION OF PROSTATE CANCER

A report in the "Weekend Australian (April 10/11) states that a protein called EPCA that signals the early presence of prostate cancer could help doctors detect the disease up to 5 years sooner than it can now be diagnosed, in a "good news" report in the latest issue of the Journal of Urology.

EPCA is a marker protein that indicates the earliest cell changes that occur during cancer development. The authors of the study suggested that testing for EPCA could assist the current diagnostic approach – repeat needle biopsies – used for men with elevated PSA levels.

"One of the problems with testing for levels of PSA as an indicator of prostate cancer is that PSA levels often fluctuate, making it difficult to know for certain whether a man has prostate cancer, without performing multiple biopsies over time", study author Robert Getzenberg, a professor of urology and pharmacology at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, said. "By testing for EPCA in men with high levels of PSA, we may be able to detect the presence of prostate cancer earlier, before it is discoverable by biopsy, saving patients the fear and stress of repeat procedures and enabling us to treat the disease sooner."

Professor Getzenberg and his colleagues compared 29 tissue samples from men with prostate cancer who had initial negative biopsies with tissue samples from 27 healthy men. They found the samples from negative biopsies of men who were later diagnosed with prostate cancer expressed EPCA. They did not detect EPCA in the biopsy sample of men who remained free of the disease.

Researchers are now conducting a multi-centre study to further assess EPCA and its potential use as a biomarker for prostate cancer.

DOCTORS UNABLE TO PREVENT BECAUSE MEN WON'T PRESENT

This was the headline to another article in the same edition of the "Weekend Australian". I have attempted to photocopy this article as a separate page in the "hard copy" edition of this newsletter, as I consider that it makes interesting reading. It contains some interesting comparisons in the mortality rates, between men and women, from the main causes of death.

MEMBERS

It has been remiss of me not to welcome some new members to our Group in this newsletter. Therefore, we belatedly welcome Pat and Margaret House, Jim and Elaine White, and Gordon Frith. We hope that you enjoy your time with our Group as you share the work that we undertake from time to time. I note that you have all been involved since joining our Group, and that is very much appreciated.

THINK ABOUT IT. There is more money being spent on breast implants and Viagra than on Alzheimer's research. This means that by 2030, there should be a large elderly population with perky boobs and huge erections with absolutely no recollection of what to do with them.

Trevor Hunt