

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

Affiliated with
Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia



ABN 26 499 349 142

NEWSLETTER

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MARCH 2004

A CHALLENGE IS ISSUED

A group of high-profile Australian business leaders has joined forces to begin a national campaign to raise awareness about prostate cancer and research into the disease. Now that should get your attention!

But it is not true. I took one small paragraph from a newspaper report, but changed two words, and wondered why it has not been possible to get men to form such a powerful lobby of men who have been affected by prostate cancer.

You see, I substituted “prostate cancer” for “organ donation”. Not that I wish to detract from the campaign about organ donation – it is a very worthy cause, and should be supported. It was just wishful thinking on my part. The one major thing that has been missing from the prostate cancer scene is any sort of concerted, or energetic reaction to any one event to bring about a meaningful campaign to raise awareness of prostate cancer, or, even more importantly, to get business and corporate leaders to join together to conduct a nation-wide campaign to raise funds for research into prostate cancer.

While the campaign for organ donation gained its initial momentum from the sad death of David Hookes and the subsequent wave of emotion, many men of similar stature in our community have died unnecessarily from prostate cancer. But those deaths have not been followed by such huge amounts of public feeling. To the contrary, most prostate cancer deaths are given as little publicity as possible.

But the sheer speed with which the business community has acted in this instance shows that it is still possible to turn an unfortunate event into a huge positive for the nation. It has been reported that the launch of the David Hookes Foundation was developed from an idea on a napkin to a complete campaign in just 36 hours. Much has been made of the fact that Australia has a very poor record in the field of organ donation, but people are reluctant to tell the community that Australia also has a very poor record in the field of prostate cancer awareness and detection.

A number of prominent Australian businessmen and corporate identities have been treated for prostate cancer. Usually, there is just a short paragraph in the papers to say the “so and so” has been treated for prostate cancer, and nothing else is heard of the man. By contrast, often, when a prominent woman is afflicted with breast cancer, there will be a blaze of publicity aimed at promoting awareness of the disease, and also towards raising funds for research into the disease.

One wonders why Australian men do not follow the same example, by using that unfortunate incident to raise the level of awareness about the disease, and by creating publicity for research funding by leading a public campaign to do just that – and there is no better way than to make a substantial personal or corporate donation. The PCFA does a good job with fundraising, but there is just so much to be achieved. I re-visit my opening statement to this article, and just imagine what a significant boost could be given to prostate cancer research if “***a group of high profile business leaders has joined forces to begin a national campaign to raise awareness about prostate cancer and research into the disease***”.

Therefore, it was very gratifying to read that a prominent Brisbane businessman, and prostate cancer patient, Bill Siganto, and his family, have pledged a \$1 million donation to the new Mater Prostate Cancer Research Centre, in Brisbane. We congratulate Mr.

Siganto and his family, and thank them very much for their wonderful and generous gesture. If it is possible for one benevolent businessman to make this move, surely there are many more men prominent in Australian business and corporate circles who could follow his example. Thank you Mr. Siganto, and may many more men follow your example. The challenge is, therefore, for other business men, corporate leaders and men of celebrity status to match the generous commitment made by Mr. Siganto.

In the meantime, the campaign for organ donation remains active in newspapers all over Australia, but any campaign to raise awareness of prostate cancer remains on the drawing board, and is now in danger of being hijacked by those who not only deliberately procrastinate, but also look for new ways of discouraging men from asking for a PSA test by extending their campaign of totally biased information. How can any man make an "informed" decision, when the information presented is biased to stressing only the disadvantages of testing and/or treatments. One would think that no man in Australia has ever had any benefit from taking a PSA test.. Australian men are in serious danger of being totally "dudged" about prostate cancer.

AWARENESS MEETINGS

WESTERN SUBURBS – WOODVILLE

The western suburbs awareness meeting will be conducted in the Murree Smith Memorial Hall, Kemp Street, Woodville, on Tuesday 30th March, 7.00pm to 9.30pm. The Murree Smith Memorial Hall adjoins the Woodville Town Hall. This hall was considered to be the most suitable hall available for the function, and has plenty of parking available.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Kim Pese, urologist, who has previously spoken to our awareness meeting at Victor Harbor. Dr. Pese is remembered as being quite informative, with a relaxed style, and with a touch of humour. Incidentally, Dr. Pese will be conducting his first brachytherapy treatment soon, at Calvary Hospital, North Adelaide.

For this meeting, we will need to provide the tea, coffee and biscuits, as no catering is available. However, the facilities are available in the hall. Advertising this meeting will be slightly different from the previous meeting. A radio interview has been arranged, and community announcements will also be broadcast on the radio. The meeting will be advertised in the Messenger Press newspaper circulating in the area, for two weeks. The second of those advertisements will be placed in a special, colour, health promotion edition. Further arrangements to be discussed at tonight's meeting.

We acknowledge that a grant of \$500.00 from the City of Charles Sturt has made this evening possible.

RIVERLAND – BERRI

Preliminary arrangements are in place to conduct an awareness meeting in Berri, on 4th May, Secretary Jeff has been in contact with Frank McNamee, who heads the local Support Group, and who has provided some invaluable support for this meeting. Perhaps this meeting will provide some impetus for the local Support Group, which has been struggling over recent times.

At this stage, it appears that the meeting will be held in the Berri Club, at no cost to our Group. My information is that the Berri Club has a very good meeting room, and provides good meals. It is almost certain that Dr. James Aspinall, visiting urologist to the area, will be the keynote speaker for the evening. More planning, and more details, after we have completed the Woodville meeting.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS – WOODCROFT

I have had some preliminary discussions with community health people based at Woodcroft, and had a very enthusiastic response. They have a suitable meeting room that could be used for the meeting, with most facilities, including serving tea and biscuits. They also would cooperate with the distribution of flyers, and could possibly assist promotion by including details of the meeting in the regular health messages that they publish in the "Southern Times" Messenger paper. Generally speaking, I consider that this is a genuine "goer", and should be achieved with very little cost on our part. I was most impressed with the reception that my enquiry received.

WEBSITE

Here's another website for members to explore. Try searching for "prostate cancer" on <http://www.bioscinews.com/>

MAN ALIVE! NOT NECESSARILY FROM MARS

Most details of our stall at the above Festival Fringe event are now complete. At tonight's meeting, we need to finalise our roster, and attend to final details.

The stall has been confirmed, and I have checked that it is 3m. X 3m., has a roof, and has a trestle table and 1 chair provided. We have enquired as to whether we could install a part of the display outside of the stall, and that has been approved. 3 display boards can be obtained from the Cancer Council, and we have adequate supplies of information pamphlets, etc.

Man Alive! is one of the final events of the 2004 Adelaide Festival Fringe calendar, and will be held at the Semaphore foreshore on Saturday 13th March, between 10.00am and 4.30pm. It aims to promote men's health and well-being in a positive and fun way for men, women and children to enjoy. At last advice, 35 stalls have been registered, including 9 food stalls. A recreation area will be established incorporating "Life Be In It" and "Be Active" philosophies. ReLink SA will assist in facilitating physical activities. There will be a musical programme, and physical activities, including a "Fling a Thong" competition. St. John Ambulance Volunteers and Police Rangers will be in attendance. Approximately 10 agencies were still considering registering for the event.. With a promising weather forecast now available, it should prove to be a popular event at an appropriate venue. Considering that the weather is now expected to be fine, with temperatures in the high 20s, and that the local Council surveys indicate that approximately 3000 people go past the site on either day of a weekend, there should be a good crowd.

The centre stage will be located near the carousel, on the lawns of the foreshore, with its back to the road. Stalls will be strategically located in the area either side and to the front of the stage. The food stalls will be located adjacent to the carousel with easy access to the shelter. The exact location of our stall is not currently known.

Marquees are going to be set up early in the morning, and stall holders will be able to take a vehicle onto the site between 8.30am and 9.30am for the purpose of unloading equipment needed for the day. Vehicles will have to be removed from the site by 9.30am. Stall holders vehicles will be permitted on to the site between 4.30pm and 5.00pm for the purpose of packing up. When on the site, drivers must follow instructions from a marshal. No parking has been specifically set aside for the day. Therefore, it will be necessary for stall holders and helpers to find their own parking in the side streets, or the public parking areas.

Don't forget to bring your hat, PCFA shirt, sunglasses, sunscreen and a chair – it should be a good day by the sea.

PREDICTING PROSTATE CANCER

Each year, hundreds of thousands of men will have prostate biopsies, but they won't end up having cancer. Now, there's a new and simple way to eliminate unnecessary biopsies.

Each year, over 1 million men like Ray Halligan have pieces snipped from their prostate gland. "It wasn't something I would want every year," Halligan says. "It was like getting punched in the leg really quick with a finger".

Biopsies carry a small risk of infection and bleeding and cost more than \$700 a piece. But according to urologic oncologist Mark Garzotto, M.D., "The vast majority of men who undergo a biopsy do so unnecessarily."

In fact, only one quarter of the men who have a biopsy have cancer. If a man has an elevated blood protein called PSA, doctors generally recommend a biopsy. Dr. Garzotto, of VA Medical/OHSU Cancer Institute in Portland, says, this mathematical formula is a better predictor. "We can find a patient that has a very high risk of having prostate cancer and separate him away from a patient that has a very low risk of having prostate cancer."

The nomogram is a formula that looks at four factors; the patient's age; digital rectal exam; ultrasound finding; and PSA density, or the PSA blood level in relation to the size of the prostate.

Using the formula, a man's prostate could be five-times normal size, but according to Dr. Garzotto's calculations, his cancer risk less than 5 per cent. Dr. Garzotto says the nomogram predicts prostate cancer accurately 92 per cent of the time. In future, it could save 200,000 unnecessary biopsies each year.

Dr. Garzotto still recommends a biopsy for men if the model predicts a man has a greater than 5% risk of having cancer. The nomogram could save \$143 million each year. (from www.healthcentral.com/news/)

ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION CAMPAIGN

Noticed that actor, Gary Sweet, is to head a new campaign about erectile dysfunction in Australia (Performance Pack Information campaign). It is designed to break down barriers about the topic, and give men an easier conversation starter at their next consultation with their GP.

However, with the negative publicity being distributed by certain authorities about prostate cancer testing, and its association with erectile dysfunction, it will probably take much more than this campaign to get men to visit their GP. A balanced campaign to encourage men to talk to their doctor about prostate cancer testing would, quite possibly, find many more men visiting their GP for a check-up. However, the public furore about PSA testing 12 months ago is more likely to have discouraged men from a medical check-up. In fact, I have heard this from some men. The other side of this situation is that I also know of men who have gone to their doctor for a PSA test, and subsequently discovered that they already had a far more serious health problem, not previously diagnosed, or suspected. If authorities continue to criticize men for not seeking health check-ups, they should also look to the messages they communicate about PSA testing and prostate cancer.

The campaign about erectile dysfunction is a good idea, as men are not renowned for seeking advice in this area. However, the campaign is one which could be adapted as a model for a message about prostate cancer awareness. But, in the ED case, the name of the chosen public relations firm was a little unfortunate – Cox Inall Communications.

FUND RAISING POLICY

The question of fund raising has arisen at both our meetings and the SAC, in recent weeks. It is common knowledge that our group has been alert to opportunities to apply for grants, where appropriate, to assist to finance our awareness meetings. Thus far, we have been able to survive under this method, but that may not be available forever. Also, if we need to purchase equipment at any time, that may require special fund raising efforts.

Alert members have suggested some organizations that may be worthwhile approaching for donations. However, as we are affiliated with PCFA, we must also respect their right to be the principal fund-raising body. Therefore, we are not permitted to approach any of the drug companies, corporations, trusts, foundations, etc., that are considered to be Australia-wide. PCFA approaches these types of potential donors, with the aim of obtaining large donations for research, and other activities of PCFA, including support groups. It is claimed that these larger corporations, etc. do not appreciate being approached by multiple small organizations seeking funds for ongoing running expenses, especially when they apparently have the same objectives. They tend to reduce their donations to PCFA if too many support groups keep making requests. The result of this is that, as a group, we should not approach the corporate sector for donations. If we really need funds to maintain our programmes, we should be applying to PCFA for that funding. There is a strong chance that any deserving application will be sympathetically treated by PCFA.

Our Group has not applied to the Australian Tax Office for Deductible Gift Recipient status, as it is unlikely that it would be granted by ATO. This also influences donations made by corporations, trusts, foundations, etc. PCFA does hold the appropriate authority from ATO, and is more likely to attract donations because of that.

In S.A., we could apply for a license to collect money, under the Collections for Charitable Purposes Act, but I doubt that we need to do that, because we do not conduct any public collection methods, such as badge days or door-knocks. If we wish to conduct a raffle, that can be done without a license, depending upon the value of the prizes.

Currently, PCFA does not have a license to collect money in S.A., but that should not prevent us from approaching companies that operate only in S.A. It is known that there are some companies that prefer to keep their donations within the State, and we should, perhaps concentrate on these, if we need to make any approaches. Of course, unsolicited donations would always be acceptable, and welcome!

It is most unlikely that service clubs, many sporting clubs, and the like, would be concerned about taxation deductions, though.. However, I do not consider that we would need to channel funds through PCFA when any sporting club, such as a bowling club or a golf club, offers to conduct a tournament (unsolicited) as a fund raiser, and indicates that they wish to donate the proceeds to our Group. I have been involved in this type of fundraising in many locations, and have never had the sponsors of those tournaments request a receipt for taxation purposes. In this respect, most sponsors are local business people, just wishing to support other worthwhile local groups, and are able to write off the costs of any trophies as promotional expenses (receipts never requested, nor required). Under those circumstances to channel those funds through PCFA is a cumbersome and unnecessary procedure.

Trevor Hunt