

KELOWNA PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & AWARENESS GROUP NEWSLETTER



**OKANAGAN PROSTATE
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Okanagan Prostate Resource Centre

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Publisher/Editor – Bren Witt

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Dr. Tom Kinahan one of the local Kelowna Urologists was our guest speaker at our August meeting. Dr. Kinahan is also the head of a local medical research facility known as **Southern Interior Medical Research Inc. (SIMR)**. SIMR is primarily involved in Urological Research Studies.

Dr. Kinahan mentioned that trial studies not only help the physicians but also help the patient. Generally people involved in medical trial studies live longer, even those who are on placebo medication. Everyone involved in medical research trial studies are followed very closely with continual visits to the research facility and tests.

During his presentation Dr. Kinahan mentioned that once prostate cancer has metastasized to the bone the individual generally has 30 months to live. Following his presentation Dr. Kinahan opened up for general questions from those in attendance. He and his partner in SIMR Mr. Joe Husch left copies of some of the upcoming research trial studies they are going to be involved with.

Some Sad News from Kelowna

On Tuesday September 21 there were two very significant announcements pertaining to cancer made in Kelowna. The first was the announcement that the BC Cancer Agency Centre for the Southern Interior is going to be renamed the **Sindi Hawkins Cancer Centre for the Southern Interior**. Named for former Kelowna MLA Sindi Hawkins who had undergone treatment for Leukemia and over the years has raised over \$3 Million for Cancer Research. Shortly after that announcement we heard Sindi Hawkins had lost her six year battle with leukemia. I would like to offer our deepest condolences to the family.

Goal of New Test is To Determine Which Men Will and Will Not Need Treatment for Prostate Cancer -

The following is a reprint of an article that appeared in the *Manitoba Prostate Cancer Newsletter*. Original article by Charlene Laino WebMD Health News – Reviewed by Laura J. Martin M.D.

Researchers are developing a new blood test to help identify which men with early prostate cancer can forgo immediate treatment.

In a small preliminary study, the test proved 70% accurate in predicting which men had more aggressive tumours that required treatment.

The results have yet to be replicated, a necessary step before acceptance by the medical community.

But the test shows promise for safety identifying men who can undergo active surveillance – close monitoring for signs of tumour growth – rather than treatment, says *Robert W. Veltri, PhD.*, an associate professor of urology and oncology at Johns Hopkins University.

“The goal of the new test, which measures blood levels of three different forms of PSA, is to determine who will and who will not progress and require treatment,” Veltri said.

The findings were presented at the annual meeting of the *American Association for Cancer Research*.

Prostate Cancer: To Treat or Not?

To treat or not to treat is one of the most difficult dilemmas facing men with prostate cancer, especially men with early, localized cancer that is contained within the prostate, when it is curable.

Because prostate cancer often grows so slowly it may never become life-threatening, many of these men, particularly older men, may die of other causes before the prostate cancer causes problems. But in some men, the cancer will spread beyond the prostate without treatment. Then it may no longer be curable.

As a result, there has been a long-running debate in the medical community about the value of treatment to destroy cancer cells vs. active surveillance and watchful waiting.

Active Surveillance consists of close monitoring with periodic digital rectal exams, yearly biopsies, and PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood tests.

New Prostate Cancer Test Shows Promise -

Rising PSA levels can be a sign of prostate cancer spread in men with early cancer. But the PSA test can't distinguish between slow growing and aggressive cancers, Veltri tell WebMD.

“Because of PSA, there is overdiagnosis and overtreatment of prostate cancer,” he says.

The new blood test, known as the *Prostate Health index (PHI)*, measures three forms of PSA, including *pro-PSA*. Pro-PSA is a shortened molecule that is missing a few of the amino acids that make up PSA protein. It's the most accurate form of PSA, Veltri says.

The federally funded study involved 71 men who were diagnosed as having small, low-grade, and low-stage prostate cancer based on their PSA results. At the time of their diagnosis, their blood had been banked.

By an average of nearly four years later, 39 had unfavorable biopsy results that signaled a need for treatment.

The PHI test was performed on blood samples from all 71 men.

“When we combined the [biopsy results] and the serum Prostate health Index, we were able to predict seven in 10 men that might progress,” Veltri says.

Veltri says the PHI test won't replace biopsies but will hopefully allow men to have them every other year instead of yearly.

His lab is now conducting an expanded study to look for other biomarkers that may predict aggressive cancers.

Test May predict Prostate Cancer Spread -

Also at the meeting, researchers reported using a microchip to detect circulating tumour cells in the blood of people with prostate cancer.

The presence of circulating tumour cells, or *CTCs*, in the blood is an indication of cancer spread, Says *Sunitha Nagrath, PhD.*, an instructor of surgery and bioengineering at Harvard Medical School.

CTCs also carry molecular signatures that can be used to guide targeted drug therapy, she says. The problem: There are only a few CTCs in millions of cells, she tells WebMD. “It's like looking for a needle in a haystack.”

The CTC-chip can capture about 200 circulating tumour cells from a teaspoon of blood she says.

In a small pilot study, the researchers found CTCs in nearly half of 20 people with early-stage prostate cancer and in two-thirds of people with advanced cancer.

“We think that's an indicator they are more prone to metastasis (cancer spread), but that remains to be proven,” Nagrath says.

This test is not commercially available.

“Eventually we hope that when a patient walks in, we can take a sample blood test that tells us if a cancer will spread and also about its molecular signature,” she says.

Massimo Christofanilli, M.D., Chairman of the department of medical oncology at Fox Chase Cancer Center, is cautiously enthusiastic, saying that a lot more work is needed before either test can be integrated into patient care.

With the CTC chip, he says, one of the issues to be worked out is to when to give the test: At the time of diagnosis, surgery, or a few weeks afterward.

There’s also the issue of who will pay for new tests, he says. “Insurance will not cover every test for every patient,” Christofanilli tells WebMD.

WITT'S WIT (ON THE LIGHTER SIDE) -

Good Golf

The bride came down the isle and when she reached the alter, the groom was standing there with his golf bag and clubs at his side.

She said: “What are your golf clubs doing here?”

He looked her in the eye ...
And said, “This isn't going to take all day, is it?”

A woman goes to the local newspaper office to see that the obituary for her recently deceased husband is published. The obit editor informs her that there is a charge of 50 cents per word.

She pauses, reflects, and then she says, well then, let it read “Fred Brown died.”

Amused at the woman’s thrift, the editor tells her that there is a seven-word minimum for all obituaries.

She thinks it over and in a few seconds says, “In that case, let it read, “Fred Brown died: Golf clubs for sale.”

Dog Sniffs Out Prostate Cancer in Small Study –

The following and excerpt of an article by *HealthDay* that appeared in the *Manitoba Prostate Cancer Newsletter*.

Researchers believe canines have a role to play in disease detection— New research suggests that dogs can sniff out signs of prostate cancer in human urine, adding to the ongoing debate over the disease-detecting powers of man's best friend.

Some scientists have questioned similar reports of dogs with such diagnostic powers in recent years, but the lead author of this latest study said the findings were promising and could lead to better cancer-sensing technology.

“The dogs are certainly recognizing the odor of a molecule that is produced by cancer cells,” said French researcher *Jean-Nicholas Cornu*, who works at Hospital Tenon in Paris.

“The problem, he said, is that “we do not know what this molecule is, and the dog cannot tell us.”

Still, the report could represent a significant development since cancer often goes undetected until it is too late to treat.

The detection of prostate cancer has been particularly controversial. Some researchers think many patients are treated unnecessarily because existing tests of PSA aren't accurate enough and fail to distinguish between dangerous and harmless cancers. Urine tests can turn up signs of prostate cancer, Cornu said, but miss some cases. Some types of molecules give a distinct odor to urine, “but today there is no means to screen odors from urine and separate them,” he said, and no way to link them to cancer.

Enter the dog, whose powers of smell are greater than those of humans.

For this study, two researchers spent a year training a Belgian Malinois shepherd, a breed already used to detect drugs and bombs.

The dog was trained to differentiate between urine samples from men with prostate cancer and

men without. Ultimately, researchers placed groups of five urine samples in front of the dog to see if it could identify the sole sample from a man with prostate cancer.

The dog correctly identified 63 out of 66 specimens.

If the findings hold up in other studies, they'll be “pretty impressive,” said urologist *Dr. Anthony Y. Smith*, who was to moderate a discussion on the findings at the American urological Association meeting in San Francisco earlier this year.

Skeptical researchers are concerned about factors that could throw off the results, said Smith, chief of urology at the University of New Mexico. Among other things, scientists wonder if the animals used in such studies pick up on subconscious signals from researchers.

If these findings are valid, they could lead to the development of more accurate tests that don't require unnecessary biopsies, Smith said.

The next steps are to determine precisely what the dogs are sniffing and to develop an “electronic nose” to detect it, Cornu said. Other dogs are already being trained.

Could doctors and hospitals employ dogs and researchers to detect prostate cancer? Cornu said that's possible, but it could cost as much as two full-time scientists.

The Kelowna Prostate Cancer Support and Awareness Group does not recommend treatment modalities; however, all information is fully shared and confidential. The information contained in this newsletter is not intended to replace the services of your health care professionals. You are advised to consult with your health professional regarding matters of your personal health.

UP COMING MEETING DATES-

November 13th – December 11th – 2011 dates will appear next month

Meeting Location:

Our regular monthly meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month in the meeting rooms of the Rutland Senior Citizens Centre – 765 Dodd Road. Our meetings begin at 9:00 A.M. and are generally over by 11:00 A.M.

I would like to thank both AstraZeneca manufacturer of Zoladex® and Casodex® and Sanofi Aventis manufacturer of Eligard® and Taxotere® for their support in producing this newsletter.

Thank you for helping us "Win the War Against Prostate Cancer."

The Okanagan Prostate Resource Centre operates on donations. We would like to thank the Companies, Service Clubs, Organizations and Individuals that have made donations in order to help us operate this very valuable center. If you wish to make a donation please feel free to fill out the form below. Your support is gratefully appreciated. Our official Registered Charitable Number is - 89269 1718 RR0001

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