



IN TOUCH

Prostate Cancer Support Groups
Newfoundland and Labrador

Winter 2006

Editor: Graham Mercer



Canadian Cancer Society
Société canadienne du cancer

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR DIVISION

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Trinity North Prostate Cancer Support Group



Ches Stanford (left) is the chairperson of the newest prostate cancer support group for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Mr. Stanford addressed the gathering on Monday evening, February 20th. This prostate cancer support group is the sixth group in the province and it meets the third Monday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the Clarenville Lions Club. The group serves the greater Clarenville area from Arnold's Cove and Swift Current to Port Blandford and

Bonavista. It's open to men and women and welcomes anyone seeking information or those willing to share their experience to help others, especially the newly diagnosed. The fact is, through the group, a presence has been established in the community by which a newly diagnosed person can readily make contact and acquire timely information. This alone eases the pain and shock of diagnosis. The group will also be active in increasing public awareness and promoting the benefit of early detection of prostate cancer.



Mr. Ross Wiseman (left), parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health and Community Services, spoke to the group on Monday evening. He congratulated Ches and those present on committing themselves to serving the region in such a manner. He pledged his support through whatever means necessary. Mr. Wiseman then outlined a partnership initiative with the Canadian Cancer Society on the development of a provincial cancer control strategy. He referenced the recent stakeholder forum which was held in November on the development of the strategy. He informed the group that the preliminary report will be released in June and hopefully the final report will be released in October. Not surprisingly, this cancer control and prevention strategy should tie in nicely with the provincial Wellness Strategy.

Avalon Group Recognition Award



On behalf of the Avalon Prostate Cancer Support Group, Bill Baker presents an appreciation certificate to Norman Ryan (center) and his wife Lorraine for their dedicated service and valuable contribution to the group in the fulfillment of its mission. The Ryans have been involved with the group since it was formed in 1997 and have logged many hours in helping others cope with a prostate cancer diagnosis. Norm is always ready to share his personal experience and wealth of understanding with others in

time of need. The prostate cancer support group/s of Newfoundland and Labrador also share in this recognition and will always be indebted to Norm and Lorraine for their valuable service in promoting prostate cancer awareness province-wide.

Events Calendar

**CPCN
National Conference**
July 30 – August 1
Fairmont Palliser Hotel
Calgary

**Walk a Mile 2006
Father's Day Weekend**

**Provincial
Survivors Conference**
September 29 – 30
Max Simms Camp

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Counseling helps sex after prostate cancer

published: Wednesday, January 4, 2006

NEW YORK (Reuters):

EVEN a few counseling sessions on sex after prostate cancer can help improve a couple's sex life, at least in the short term, research hints.

Researchers found that among 84 prostate cancer survivors, those who completed four therapy sessions - whether they attended alone or with their partners - reported better sexual functioning three months later. Similarly, their wives and partners said their sex lives were more satisfying.

These improvements, however, began to wane six months after therapy.

The bottom line, according to the study authors, is that while counseling can help couples rekindle their sexual relationship after prostate cancer, a lingering question is how to make the benefits last.

Dr. Andrea L. Canada and her colleagues at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston report the findings in the journal **Cancer**.

COMMON SIDE EFFECT

Sexual dysfunction is a common side effect of surgery and radiation treatment for prostate cancer. Studies have consistently found that the large majority of men have erectile dysfunction (ED) after treatment, while many may also have a low libido and trouble reaching orgasm.

Medication, like Viagra, can help some patients, but ED caused by prostate cancer treatment does not respond as well to drugs as other forms of ED do, Canada and her colleagues note.

To see whether counseling sessions could help couples improve their sex life, the researchers randomly assigned 84 men and their partners to one of two groups. In one group, men attended counseling alone, while couples in the second group went to sessions together.

Counseling focused on open communication between partners, treatment options for ED and how to enjoy sex despite ED. Both groups received four sessions plus 'homework' assignments. Immediately following treatment and three months later, both men and their partners reported improvements in their sex life, regardless of which group they were in. In addition, more men began using ED treatments - more than 50 per cent after counseling, versus 31 per cent before.

However, the improvements both partners reported in their sex life had begun to wane by the six-month mark, the study found. Women, in particular, seemed happiest immediately after the counseling sessions ended.

It's possible, the researchers speculate, that over time, couples went back to their 'perfunctory' sexual routine, especially as more men received treatment for their erectile problems.

SHEDDING BELIEFS

But the success of counseling, according to Canada and her colleagues, depends on men being able to shed their beliefs about the all-importance of the erection and the ability of a 'magic pill' to restore their sex life. "It is not surprising that men and women prefer the magic pill," the researchers write, "but if we can create more realistic expectations, perhaps they will be willing to try interventions that focus less on penile rigidity and more on relationship flexibility."

The Newfoundland and Labrador Prostate Cancer Advisory Board (NLPCAB) has completed its third successful year. The board is comprised of nine members, with representation from the following:

- prostate cancer survivors (4)
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Eastern Health and Community Services
- Department of Urology, Health Science Center
- Bliss Murphy Cancer Center
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Medical Advisor (non board member)

The board has been structured so that only prostate cancer survivors are eligible for the positions of chair and vice chair. Monthly meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month.

A number of committees have been established to deal with the following items:

- **Support group development:** This program continues high on our priority list. The Trinity North group was established recently in the Clarenville area. This results in a total of six groups in the province. Two other areas have expressed a growing interest in forming a group.
- **Annual retreat:** The third annual retreat for survivors was held in early October at the Max Simms Lions Camp in central Newfoundland. Sixty-five persons attended including Wally Seeley from the Network. The entire cost of this event was funded as an initiative of Walk a Mile and Pfizer.
- **Continuing Medical Education (CME):** I am pleased to report our first CME has gone over well with the medical community. Last year a survey of the family practitioners was designed to determine their knowledge/interest in having more information/awareness available around prostate cancer. The survey showed 67% wanted more educational updates on the current prostate cancer research. In consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) it was determined that the best method of delivering this information would be through telemedicine at the MUN Medical School. This program was funded in part by the NLPCAB and was prepared and delivered by the School of Medicine and a urologist via teleconference to twenty practitioners and health care provider's province-wide. This success of this program is currently under review. Pending the review, additional programs may be provided.
- **Public awareness:** We continue with our public awareness programs. The coordinator schedules presentations by written solicitation to local service clubs, church groups, etc. Each support group is encouraged to work within the local community to create local awareness projects. Results may be found on our website.
- **Patient navigation:** This project was commissioned in June in partnership with the Canadian Cancer Society, NL division. Two "work term" nursing students were engaged to prepare a need assessment on such a program. A summary report has recently been received and is currently under review by the board. Needless to say, the board is very encouraged with the results so far and we are looking to form additional partnerships to bring this important project to a successful conclusion. A copy of the survey and position paper can be forwarded upon request.
- **Peace of Mind:** A new awareness poster campaign has been developed. Currently sponsorship is being secured. A tentative media launch date has been set for late spring.
- **Walk a Mile in His Shoes:** Program began in 2000 and is continuing to grow. This past year 30 communities participated in our annual Father's Day event and raised approximately \$100,000. Planning for 2006 has already commenced. We hope to include "the Mayor's Walk for prostate cancer" as an adjunct to the 2006 Walk. We are disappointed that CPCN has not to this date been successful in bringing other "fundraising" support groups together as discussed in our August Board meeting.

Future Projects under consideration:

- A needs assessment to consider the value of a provincial prostate cancer registry
- A review of the current provincial guidelines for prostate cancer examinations
- Host the 2007 CPCN Conference (if selected)

All in all it has been a very successful year and we look forward to an even brighter 2006.

D. H. C. LeGrow
Board Chair

Full Steam Ahead for Our Voice

Many CPCN News readers will be familiar with **Our Voice**, a magazine for men with prostate cancer published by Parkhurst Publishing. Thanks to an unrestricted educational grant from AstraZeneca Canada Inc., **Our Voice** is now back to publishing four times yearly. Along with updates on the latest medical and research information, **Our Voice** draws upon reader input for some of its editorial content. Readers may submit questions to be answered by specialists from the magazine's editorial board or personal stories. **Our Voice** publishes personal stories, about 700 words in length, says managing editor, Mairi MacKinnon. It may be a story written by the reader. Other times the story is based on an interview with one of our writers. Men and their partners are invited to submit questions or stories to the magazine. Mackinnon explains, however, that it is not possible to print all stories and questions, and it may take several months for the answer or article to appear. **Our Voice** also features regular listings of Canadian support groups. Therefore, support groups should contact Parkhurst Publishing with updated contact information for each group. Support groups will also be sent 10 copies of each new issue, upon request.

For a [free one-year subscription](#), or to submit a question or a story, contact:

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Earlier detection, better treatments improving prognoses

BY DR. MICHAEL WOSNICK, Executive Director of the National Cancer Institute of Canada
THE GLOBE AND MAIL, SEPTEMBER 21, 2005

Fifty-six Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer today. For them, it will not be a happy day. But they need to know that beyond the fear lies very real hope. Death rates for prostate cancer in Canada fell by almost 15 per cent between 1991 and 2000. Most men with prostate cancer today will go on to enjoy full, healthy lives. That's because prostate cancer is being diagnosed earlier than ever before. It's also being treated more successfully. Research is pushing the boundaries of what scientists and doctors could only dream of two decades ago. Treatments have been refined to be more effective and to have fewer side effects than ever before.

While researchers are making progress on many fronts and we know far more about prostate cancer than we did even five years ago, we still need to know much more. If present incidence rates remain steady, 1 in 7 Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer at some point in his life. For these men, we need to learn more about how to prevent prostate cancer. We need therapies that will be even better tolerated, and we need to find better ways to care for prostate cancer patients and their families while they are undergoing treatment. Most of all, we need more reliable screening tests for prostate cancer. Developing such tests is a key focus of researchers today. An ideal screening test would detect the disease at an early stage, would give a very low rate of false positives and would tell doctors definitively which form of prostate cancer a man has. This is vital information because different types of prostate cancer benefit most from different types of treatment. Some prostate cancers require aggressive treatment, and some actually may not need more than active monitoring.

As a society, we need to be far more aware of this most common of male cancers. Every Canadian man should know the facts about prostate cancer – what it is, and how to protect himself. Despite recent advances, prostate cancer will continue to be a major men's health issue for years to come. Men of all ages and stages of health must work together to build awareness of this disease, both at the personal and the political level. It's a health problem men and Canadian society as a whole cannot afford to ignore.

*If you would like to have your **story/journey** printed in a future issue, please forward a copy of it, along with a recent photo (optional), to me at gmercerc@nl.cancer.ca or write to:*

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