

YOUR HEALTH IS YOUR WEALTH

Discover the latest insights into prostate cancer during Men's Health Month with the Faculty of Health Sciences Research Directorate. Explore key risk factors, early detection methods, and treatment options to empower men with vital knowledge for proactive prostate health.

What is Prostate Cancer?

Cancer in the male's prostate gland (the prostate is a small walnut-sized gland that produces seminal fluid (fluid that nourishes and transports sperm). Prostate cancer may be slow growing or aggressive. Currently the fifth leading cause of death globally. Most commonly diagnosed cancer in 50% of countries worldwide. Most prostate cancers tend to grow slowly and are low-grade with relatively low risk and limited aggressiveness. If cancer is confined to the prostate only, it is considered to be localized and curable. If the prostate cancer has spread beyond the prostate, more intense medication strategies such as chemotherapy may be required.



Prostate Cancer Symptoms

Prostate cancer may become fatal if left untreated. Here are some common symptoms to look out for:

1. Painful or burning urination
2. Weak or interrupted flow of urine
3. A need to urinate frequently, especially at night
4. Difficulty starting urination or holding back urine
5. Blood in urine or semen
6. Difficulty in having an erection
7. Painful ejaculation
8. Frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs

Diagnostics

Diagnosis is primarily based on prostate-specific antigen (PSA) testing and transrectal ultrasound-guided (TRUS) prostate tissue biopsies.

Newer diagnostic modalities include free and total PSA levels, PCA3 urine testing, Prostate Health Index scoring (PHI), the "4K" test, exosome testing, genomic analysis, MRI imaging, PIRADS scoring, and MRI-TRUS fusion guided biopsies.

Early Detection is Key

Early detection of prostate cancer is absolutely crucial due to its prevalence as the most diagnosed cancer among South African men. With an estimated 1 in 15 men at risk of developing prostate cancer in their lifetime, it becomes imperative to prioritize timely screenings and awareness campaigns.

Detecting prostate cancer in its early stages offers the best chance for successful treatment and improved long-term outcomes. Regular screenings, such as prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests and digital rectal exams, enable healthcare professionals to identify potential abnormalities and initiate further diagnostic investigations promptly.

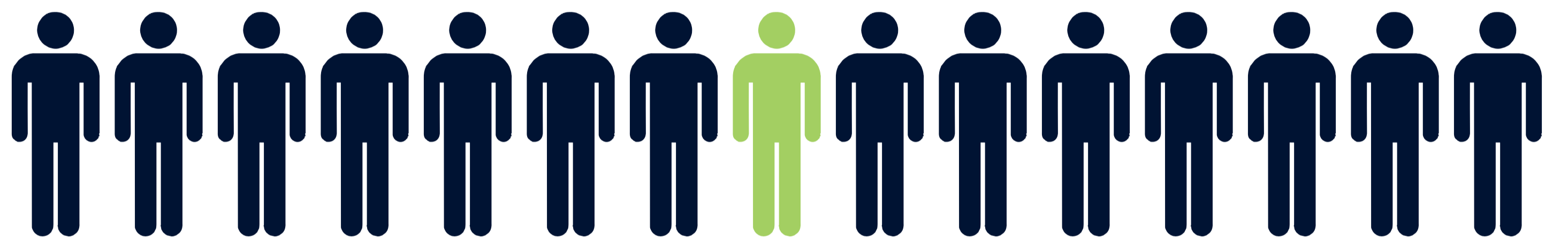


Figure 1: Prostate cancer is the most diagnosed cancer in South African men. An estimated 1 in 15 men will develop prostate cancer in their lifetime.

Over 50 Year Olds

Prostate cancer is most common in men over the age of 50 but may show up around 40-45 or even younger in higher risk men. Other risk factors include weight, exposure to chemicals in the environment, lifestyle choices and genetics.



Conclusion

By increasing knowledge and being aware about risk factors and the importance of early detection, we empower individuals to take charge of their health. Let us unite in spreading awareness and encouraging regular screenings to ensure timely diagnosis, effective treatment, and improved outcomes for those affected by prostate cancer.



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