

635 PROSTATE CANCER SURVIVORS AND THEIR FAMILIES, FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE PSA TEST.



Tens of thousands of men throughout the United States feel confused about the prostate specific antigen blood test. The United States Preventive Services Task Force's May, 2012 recommendation against the use of the PSA test for prostate cancer screening for all men has caused concern, anger and fear. Men throughout the United States now question whether the PSA test is right for them.

We are concerned that men will not learn that they have prostate cancer until they are symptomatic with a late stage disease. The problem with the PSA test is around the timing and extent of treatment when there is a positive PSA test or biopsy. Those problems from over-treatment come from doctors providing inadequate consultations which can frighten men into treatments that may be too soon or inappropriate, and patients that are willing to subject themselves to treatments without doing the research to fully understand their situation.

This book is in two parts: One quite brief and the other quite long.

The first part contains several facts about PSA testing and prostate cancer treatment.

The second part contains comments about the PSA test from 635 prostate cancer patients, wives, husbands, partners, sons and daughters. Read through these pages and you will find someone like you; someone who once wondered if the PSA test was right for them.

If you are a man with African genetic heritage, then you should know that prostate cancer kills twice as many Black men as it does other men in the United States. As of May, 2012, we do not know why. But, this staggering disparity should give you reason to be more concerned about prostate cancer if you are Black. Some doctors also consider family history of prostate cancer as presenting an elevated risk.

Facts you must know:

- PSA stands for "prostate specific antigen" test, not, "prostate cancer specific antigen test." The PSA test suggests possible problems but does not define them.
- A low or "normal" result can give you a false sense of safety. The PSA test is not at all foolproof.
- An elevated result on your PSA test can start a cascade of bad choices and harmful treatments that may do nothing to extend your life. Use Malecare and other prostate cancer support groups to help you navigate that.

- PSA tests are one half of a two part examination...the other is the digital rectal exam, where your doctor actually feels for lumps and bumps that may be suspicious.
- Be skeptical of statistics. Five year survival rates for prostate cancer are excellent because prostate cancer tends to grow slowly. About a third of men experience recurrence and advanced stage disease 5 – 10 years after their initial treatment.
- Be skeptical of anyone who minimizes side effects from treatment. No man emerges entirely unchanged after prostate cancer treatment, and many men experience quality of life reducing impotence and incontinence.
- Do not rush into treatment! Ask your doctor about the pros and cons of active treatment versus active surveillance.

According to the American Urological Association, not all prostate cancers require active treatment and not all are life threatening. The decision to proceed to active treatments is one that men should discuss in detail with their urologists to determine whether active treatment is necessary or whether active surveillance is appropriate.

What is the PSA test?

The PSA test is a blood test that measures the amount of a prostate specific antigen, in your blood stream. Prostate specific antigen is a protein produced by cells of the prostate gland. If the quantity of PSA is elevated, then there is presumption of suspicious activity in your prostate. Your doctor will probably refer you to a urologist for a biopsy.

Biopsies have a small risk of infection and you should discuss this risk with your doctor. Ask your primary doctor to discuss what other reason your PSA result might be elevated. Ask about inflammation or prostatitis, enlargement of the prostate, called Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). Sometimes prostate affecting activity, like sex or bike riding the day before your blood test can raise your PSA test result.

Even if you do go for a biopsy and the pathology report of your biopsy describes samples with prostate cancer tissue, you still are not at death's door. Ask your doctor to review your biopsy report with you, and also ask to have a second opinion on your biopsy report. More information about getting a second opinion can be found at <http://malecare.org/second-opinion-on-biopsy-slides/>

The guys that we worry about most are the ones who get treated by the first doctor they meet, and think that they are now cured. But, you are not like that. We know that because you are reading this book. You are already light years ahead of most cancer patients who knuckle under to their diagnosis. And, because you are seeking information,

you have a great chance of getting the best possible outcome of any man diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2012 in the United States.

Consider avoiding the PSA test if you feel that you might die in ten years or less, either due to advanced age or pre-existing illness.

Prostate Cancer can remain small, contained and reasonably stable. In this situation it poses no health risk. Most prostate cancers grow so slowly that you will die from something else before you will be old enough for prostate cancer to kill you. But, for approximately 30,000 men in the United States, every year, prostate cancer grows rapidly and is so aggressive that it will kill you regardless of when it is discovered.

Avoid public prostate cancer screenings if you are predisposed to mood and anxiety disorders. Only have a PSA test after speaking with your doctor.

First: Make no decisions until you are comfortably informed about your situation.

Read the patient and doctor written articles about prostate cancer symptoms, treatment and causes on malecare.org.

Prostate cancer tends to be progress slowly. There is usually no need for urgency. But make no mistake...some men do die from cancer. There is no worse side effect than death.

If your diagnosis is genuinely grave, your doctor will tell you. If not, then take time to understand what you can do to extend your life, without damaging your quality of life.

Second: Ask questions about your cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment.

Answers about cancer won't find you, you have to ask. Please don't assume that your doctor will tell you everything that you need to know. There are lists of questions for you to ask about prostate cancer treatments on the Malecare.org website.

Prostate Cancer treatment may extend your life, but might also cause collateral damage or side effects, such as incontinence or impotence. Even the best treatment choice may have consequences you probably won't like. And no currently available treatment is perfect. About a third of all men see their prostate cancer return to threaten their life after their initial treatment.

Learn about the difference between "cancer cure" and "cancer treatment."

Third: Decide for yourself if you can manage to have a happy life if your doctor tells you that you have a cancer inside you, but that it won't kill you.

How might you feel when you hear the word, "cancer," in the course of your everyday life, knowing you harbor a tumor and that there probably isn't anything that you should do about it.

Fourth: Speak with other guys at an online or in-person prostate cancer support group.

You are lucky. Our online support groups, with hundreds of guys participating every day, are only a click away. Hear our stories. Put your natural and perfectly human thoughts and fears into a more helpful perspective. Cancer treatments, symptoms, diagnosis, and causes can be confusing...we are here to help.

Most men expect their doctor to recommend the precise prostate cancer treatment that they need. They are surprised and anxious when the doctor discusses several possible treatments and says the patient has to decide for himself which one to choose.

Most all men find value in speaking with the three different specialists that treat prostate cancer: urologist, a radiation oncologist and a medical oncologist. Get consultations with all three before making any decision about treatment, to get a balanced picture of the benefits and drawbacks of all the cancer treatment options available to you.

Instantly question any doctor who says that she or he can "cure" prostate cancer. What does "cure" really mean for a prostate cancer patient? Be skeptical of any doctor who discounts or minimizes the possibility of incontinence or impotence from the various prostate cancer treatments.

Ask if active surveillance (monitoring your cancer until a time when treatment is absolutely necessary) is appropriate for you. Try to bring a second set of ears, a friend, family member or voice recorder with you during all consults. You are human, and it is difficult to hear and later, remember, everything that your doctor may tell you. Read more about doctor choice making and getting a good consult at Malecare.org.

Then, take time to let all of this new information relax into your thinking. Experience tells us that men who take time to get an understanding of the realities of prostate cancer will find themselves making treatment choices that they can live with, without regret, no matter what their long term outcomes. The guys who suffer most are those who succumbed to the rush to treatment.

Now, continue reading through the hundreds of patient experiences about PSA testing. You are free to skim, or read closely, but, do ask yourself while reading, if PSA testing is right for you.

More information about prostate cancer, and prostate cancer support groups, can be found at www.malecare.org. Please feel encouraged to contact me if you have any questions or comments about this book.

Note: The photos in this book are not necessarily that of the person who wrote the adjacent text.

Darryl Mitteldorf, LCSW
Executive Director
Malecare, Inc.
Men fighting cancer, together.
darryl@malecare.org

Now, please proceed to the next page.

Richard

I am living proof of the value of the PSA test. I was asymptomatic at age 49 and was diagnosed with a PSA of 58 with my first PSA test. I wish I had been tested earlier.

Gary

My Doctor found my PSA going up rapidly. He ordered me to get a biopsy, and it was found I had a high count that showed I had prostate Cancer, and it was a very aggressive type. I feel the test has saved my life, as early detection allowed them to treat me before it spread to other area of my body.

Thomas

PSA test probably saved my life. Had I heeded the warning and my primary physician done also I may have had my cancer removed earlier. Now at this time I am with prostate cancer and PSA rising even after radical prostatectomy. My son also had PSA test as first indication of his prostate cancer. I have five sons and they are all at risk. At this moment we have no better warning system.



Luke

I got my PSA tested for the first time when I was 51 years old: a very high and dangerous score of 38 was the result. My biopsy showed cancer with a Gleason score of 3+4=7.

I attend several group meetings of the Malecare group in NYC and decided to go for the surgery. I am now watching my PSA score after surgery, because that is the best way to know when to kill my cancer if it ever comes back.

If my GP did not recommend a PSA test, I would still be unaware of a developing cancer; now I have a fighting chance.

It is not that the PSA screening test that is the issue, it is what the patient and doctors do with the result. Please continue PSA screening for all high risk men and all men over 45 years old.

Michael

In 2008 I went to my doctor for a routine physical and found that in the two years since my previous exam my PSA had increased from 2 to 10. A digital exam revealed an anomaly. A subsequent biopsy returned a diagnosis of prostate cancer with a Gleason score of 7 (4-3).

After considering my options for a couple of months I chose IMRT Radiation therapy and now, three years later, I am cancer free with a PSA of 0.4. I have not suffered any side effects from the therapy and my life continues as it did prior to treatment.

PSA tests are not an issue. The issues revolve around side effects from biopsies and therapies such as surgery. We need to refine therapies so that men experience fewer side effects. And when appropriate, the medical community needs to more convincing when they promote watchful waiting.

Eric

After 25 years of PSA testing my results started to increase dramatically. After a positive biopsy I elected to have a Robotic-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy. I have had a complete recovery with minimal side effects.

Without the PSA test I would never have known about my cancer. Although the PSA test is not perfect, until there is something better, I feel men should continue with the testing.

Robert

My family doctor watched my PSA numbers over a few years. When the numbers began to rise, he recommended a biopsy of the prostate. When the results came back as positive for cancer, I sought the best solution. Both doctors I consulted recommended

surgery for a male of my age. I had a radical prostatectomy and my PSA remains a zero, three and a half years later.

Without the PSA tests and the treatment, I likely would have had cancer that spread and perhaps would have killed me.



Paul

A couple of years ago during a routine physical through a PSA test my primary care physician found it to be very high at 42 and sent me off to an urologist. He discovered I had an infection and prescribed a medication to bring the number down. It did come down but now only to 15 so my urologist did a biopsy and found cancer in my prostate. I elected for surgery. I am now cancer free and fully recovered. Had I not had a PSA it would have been a much different story.

Richard

Being a survivor of prostate cancer, I can attest to the importance of having a blood test for Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA). It is from a series of PSA tests, producing an upward trend, that further investigation became warranted and revealed an aggressive cancer requiring treatment. For me Digital Rectal Exams (DRE) performed at the same time revealed no evidence of cancer. It is important to note that since there is no history of prostate cancer in my family; PSA testing led to early cancer detection and saved my life.

William

Without PSA testing my cancer would have remained undetected until a tumor was large enough to be detected in a routine DRE. When the PSA was over 4.0 (nothing noted on DRE) I was referred to the urologist who did detect something on a DRE. A subsequent biopsy confirmed the cancer. The biopsy results along with the PSA history which showed the rapid increase in PSA level resulted in my decision for prostate removal. In the absence of routine PSA testing and the resulting history my cancer could have gone undetected until it was too late.

Ken

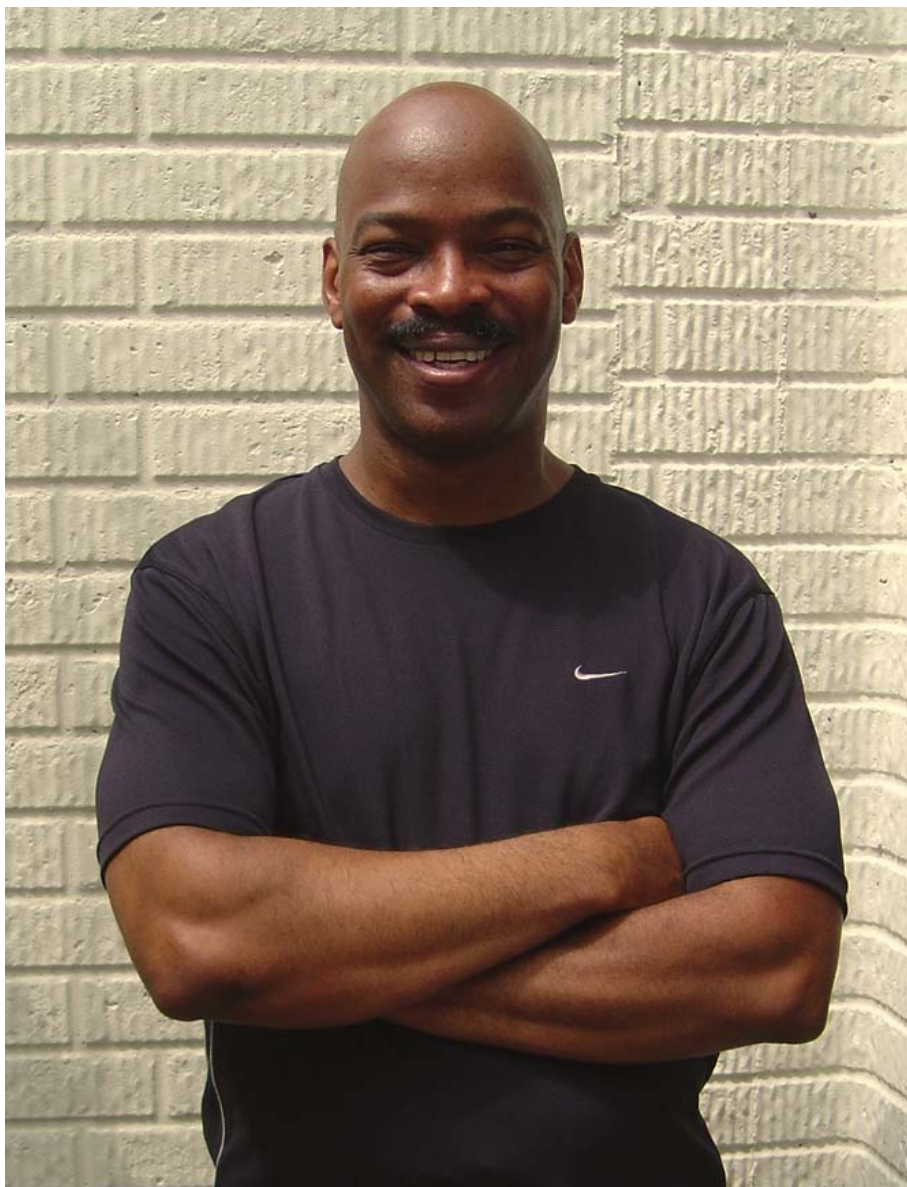
After age 50 the PSA was part of my annual company management physical. I continued to have the PSA done after retirement at age 66. At age 68 the PSA increase caused my doctor to send me for a biopsy which was positive and scary. After the 4 months of daily radiation both PSA and internal exam showed no more prostate cancer. Without the PSA testing, I would never have known as I was an otherwise healthy male. I now expect to enjoy the LIVING benefits of my retirement years for a long time.

Ted

Prostate Cancer killed my dad. I was diagnosed at age 47. Had it not been for an elevated PSA I would not have investigated it further and found it. I am now going on 7 years as a survivor.

Anonymous

The PSA just saved my life. I'm 57 and it doubled in a year. That is the only flag - coupled with typical urinary issues and fatigue- that prompted the biopsy and diagnosis at Stage 1. I had my prostate removed last week and will likely never have that cancer again - because it was detected early and therefore very treatable or removable with little chance of spreading. Oh - PSA testing will confirm that also. It's absurd that insurance companies would both promote preventive and wellness care and then not pay for the PSA's.



Raymond

PSA testing allowed me to track the progress of an enlarged prostate to the point where watching and waiting seemed an unnecessary risk. At that point a biopsy was indicated and performed which resulted in a stage 3 reading and treatment by radiation. I was 79 years old. I am now 90 and the radiation treatment was completely successful. PSA testing in my case was a necessary part of the diagnosis and treatment and avoided undue worry and indecision. To avoid it seemed to me the height of silliness.

Phillip

PSA and DRE tests save lives.

I am a commercial aviator—an air transport pilot. Twenty-two years ago I was flying corporate jets, and I was required to undergo a medical examination every six months to demonstrate that I was fit to fly.

My aviation medical examiner [AME], a cardiologist certified by the Federal Aviation Administration, was required by the FAA to offer all male pilots age 40 and older a digital rectal examination [DRE] for early detection of prostate cancer—second greatest killer-cancer of men, after lung cancer, and cause of death of more than 34,000 American men annually in the mid-to-late 1980s.

At that time, the FAA, like many federal agencies, with operational truckers, railroad engineers, ship's bridge crews, military and civilian flight personnel, and others were required to comply with an edict from the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta to offer males aged 40 and older digital-rectal and prostate specific antigen [PSA] testing for prostate cancer.

In February 1989, my AME found an induration—a lump in the distal portion of my prostate. He recommended I consult with an urologist. I did so but the urologist thought it was merely an enlarged prostate, and treated me with antibiotics.

Four years and eight flight physical examinations later, my AME was so alarmed over what he described as the hardest lump he ever palpitated in a pilot's prostate, that he recommended I seek a second opinion.

When I advised my urologist of my AME's concern, he agreed to begin a series of six-needle biopsies of my enlarged prostate. Finally, in late-1993, after three biopsies and 18 needle tissue samples, the urologist and his technicians found Adenocarcinoma cells—prostate cancer, judged by a local pathologist to be Gleason Score 6.

By late 1993, scans and various tests prompted my urologist and various consulting specialists to determine that my tumor had left the prostate, was in my abdomen, and had metastasized to my pelvis, ribs, and other bones in my body.

And so began my long battle against prostate cancer.

Nineteen years later, after unsuccessful external beam radiation [70 Gray over seven weeks], nearly seven years of androgen depletion therapy [ADT], several hormone shots, 65 hours of hyperbaric oxygen treatment, participation in a 28-man phase one prostate cancer vaccine clinical trial, I continue to undergo regular checks of my PSA.

I have discontinued medications, my tumor growth apparently is controlled and I am a very active, productive member of society who, at nearly eighty-one years of age, participates as an executive officer of a 39-state prostate cancer coalition, I am a certified flight instructor for single- and multi-engine aircraft, instrument flight instructor, with a commercial sea and many other flight ratings.

I am a firm believer in DRE and PSA testing to detect potentially lethal prostate cancer as early as possible, and to control or cure cancer, rather than die from it, like too many of my dead friends.

Anonymous

I am married to a man who discovered he had prostate cancer because of a PSA test. I believe that he would not be with me today unless he had a PSA test.

Bruce

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in late 2003 because of the early warnings of the PSA test. The original diagnosis was subsequently confirmed by biopsy and later in May 2004 received a successful radiation seed implant. I have no doubt that without the PSA test detection of the relatively rapid rise in my PSA that I would have faced an uncertain outcome.

Greg

About one year ago, after the urging of my wife, I went in for a routine physical, a PSA screening was part of the process. The results came back with an evaluated PSA level with prompted the scheduling of a visit with an urologist. His PSA test along with a prostate examine warranted a prostate biopsy. With those results came the phone call that changed my life forever, I was told I has cancer.

I underwent surgery to remove my prostate and knock on wood, my first year as a cancer survivor has been an enlightening one. When I read an article about the recent report that PSA tests are unnecessary and that they haven't saved anyone's life I almost fell out of my chair. I am living proof that the PSA test can and does save lives, it did mine.

Val

After I finished proton treatment, I was told to get PSA tested every 3 months. PSA had been around 0.3 for a year and I also continued my Lupron injections. Then PSA started to double every 3 months and a year later it was over 4. My oncologist became concerned but needed to be sure it was not a testing error, so a retest results 2 week later showed even a higher PSA. We also needed to make sure we were not experiencing an

infection. We tried one antibiotic for two weeks, it didn't work PSA on 12/04/2010 was 9.3 so we went to another family of antibiotics – no help PSA 17.8 on 1/24/2011.

My oncologist suspected cancer so we started with bone scan then CT and MRI, no cancer detected but PSA rose to 25.6 by 03/10/2011. Oncologist did not give up, he obtained permission for PET NaF F18 (designed for bone investigation) – nothing positive. He then requested PET dfg F18 – Bingo – almost all abdominal and some chest lymph nodes were filled with cancer cells. My prostate on the other hand was clear indicating Proton Center did a good job but unfortunately cancer became metastatic prior to treatment. PSA became the guide that let us discover location of my cancer through a right instrument. Radiation oncologist suggested I go to a medical oncologist for treatment.

After many tests and scans my medical oncologist started me on Docetaxel chemotherapy on 4/07/2011. PSA was still rising and after 4 infusions MRI indicated growth in lymph nodes. I was switched to Cabazitaxel (Jevtana) chemotherapy and PSA at 30 on 07/12/2011. After 4 treatments PSA increased to 48.35 on 09/16/2011 so another MRI showed further small increase in lymph node sizes. On 10/06 2011 with PSA rising to 50.61 it was decided to discontinue Cabazitaxel and try Zytiga. After much approval work I started Zytiga on 10/21/2011 and plans are to monitor PSA every 3 weeks probably for next 8 months.

As one can see from my experience, PSA was a valuable tool that my radiation oncologist was urged to keep looking for cancer till it was found. My medical oncologist used PSA to request MRI for confirmation that chemo was not working and changes had to be made.

Anonymous

I am a survivor of prostate cancer for over 4 years. I have had a series of PSA tests over time and I skipped one PSA test. The following year, when I was 73, the test proved positive and with a Gleason Scale of 9, which led to radiation treatment. If I had not had that PSA test, I feel certain that I would not be there today. My current PSA test was .02

There was no prostate cancer in my family history, which some would say is a reason not to have a PSA test. I would say that they are wrong.

Craig

It took me 14 years to finally go for my yearly check-up. And I got the bad news that I had prostate cancer had a PSA of 59.9 and was outside the prostate gland. If I was one those guys that went for annual physicals, I would be where I'm now.



Stephen

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 53. By the time it was discovered by a digital exam, it had spread beyond the prostate. Had I followed the guideline of testing PSA at age 50, I might not still be dealing with the cancer because the treatments might have put it into remission.

Joe

I had an elevated PSA number at age 64. My doctor suggested another test after three weeks—it was also elevated. He suggested I visit a specialist. He did normal testing and said everything looked OK. But, since you are in here why not take a biopsy, which they did.

He asked me about the seven normal indicators for Prostate Cancer—I had none. The results came back and I tested positive in 3 of the 8 tests. After discussing it with my regular doctor and family, I scheduled the procedure to remove my prostate. After

operation they found that I had cancer on two outer sides of the Prostate gland. Further follow-ups have proven the cancer did not move beyond the margins. AFTER 10 YEARS I AM HEALTHY AND NO SIGNS OF RETURN.

I cautioned my three sons and my brother that they should request a PSA test on their next annual physical. They did this to get a base-line' of their PSA level. All turned out normal.

LAST YEAR, THE PSA OF MY ELDEST SON (age 51) WAS ELEVATED, they did normal follow-ups and retesting. Within six months HE WAS ALSO DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER. Now, six months later, he has had Robotic surgery and had the gland removed. Follow up testing has so far proven that it has not spread.

Ward

3 years ago (at age 58) I had not even heard there was something called Prostate Cancer (PC). I had never had or heard of a PSA test. I was having symptoms (I did not tell anyone about) that I did not understand. So (2 and 1/2 years ago at age 59) I went for a physical. As a routine my new doctor included a PSA test. A DRE did not indicate anything.

The result was 75. He knew right away what the problem was and sent me to the Urologist (by then the PSA had risen to 79). After biopsies (all 12 samples were all PC) and scans it was determined that I had Stage 4 advanced metastatic (Gleason score 9) PC. It had already damaged part of my bladder. It had spread through many lymph nodes (more biopsies) up my back. Of course I started treatment.

Now when I get a physical my doctor reminds me (accurately) that I would be dead today if it were not for the routine PSA test. My family and I all thank God that my doctor had the foresight to include that "routine" PSA test.

Anonymous

My PSA was deceptively low, 1.5, for a man of 66 years, but a routine digital rectal exam told the story. One might think that I would be opposed to the PSA test. On the contrary, I have too many friends who first learned of a possible problem as the result of a high PSA. This led to a DRE, biopsy, etc. resulting in the discovery of aggressive prostate cancer. The test is far from perfect, but it is one of a very few tools we have to point us in the right direction. Hopefully no treatment is ever performed without utilizing all the tools we have.

There are nearly 34,000 reasons we have each year in the United States to remind us of the importance of every tool, no matter how imperfect. We cannot lose sight of the lives that are lost.

Ed

It started in Nov 2009. During my regular physical I had a PSA test. The numbers were a little high and I had another one 6 months later. It went up again. I was put on antibiotics for 3 weeks and then another PSA test. It was up again. That led to a biopsy and in Nov. 2010, I was diagnosed with a very aggressive prostate cancer. No family history and no symptoms. I had a radical prostatectomy in Dec. 2010 and am alive today and recovering nicely. The only reason I am alive is because of PSA testing.

Harley

In the summer of 2007 as a part of a routine physical, my doctor ordered a PSA test. A blood test revealed an elevated PSA count and I was referred to a Urologist. What followed was a biopsy resulting in a Gleason Score of 8. Further testing revealed the cancer was isolated to the prostate and I began to research the various treatment options available to me. Following much research, a second opinion and a long consultation with my urologist I opted for a radical nerve sparing surgery prostatectomy.

This was not a difficult decision as this was not my first cancer and at the time I was 57 years old. Of course regular PSA screening followed the surgery. My scores were well within in the acceptable post range surgery until June of 2011. Again, through the use of PSA testing I was diagnosed with a recurrence. Now the process of research, securing a second opinion and meetings with my urologist are assisting I am examining treatment options to handle the recurrence. My family and I feel that the PSA test was a lifesaver and I'm forever grateful of its availability.

Linda

My story is a little different, as the PSA did not save my husband. He was one of the 2.8% that had the rare aggressive type of cancer. His PSA came back normal, as did the physical exam.

In July of 2009, just after we both retired, he fell in our pool breaking his back, leaving him paralyzed from the chest down. He died once during surgery, and they never expected him to make it out of rehab. He fought, and came home after 5 weeks in rehab, not even needing sub-acute rehab. He came home with pain in his shoulders and chest. His pain was ignored, and blamed on the spinal cord injury. It was bone mets. Before he fell in the pool, he had been having problems with frequent urination, slow stream; all the red lights. But due to his injury, that all became transparent, as he had to self catharsize himself.

Finally after 8 days in bed and no help from his doctors I took him to the ER where they found the bone mets. From there on it was a downward spiral. We did lots of alternative medicine, stopped the chemo as that just about killed him. Ultimately the cancer won and I lost my best friend and soul mate. I am crushed and lost without him. The PSA is not the best test in the world, but it's all men have to use as a baseline and

somewhat predictor of a problem. A man and his family have the right to make their decision on a treatment course. Not doing the PSA and not paying for it will cost our spouses, fathers, sons, brothers, and friends their lives.

Rick

Turning 50, I had no noticeable issues with my prostate, but it was recommended that I have my first baseline PSA screening for prostate cancer. The test came back high at 6.2, three months later at 8.1, and over the next few months it went up to 10.2. Though I had a small prostate and no other symptoms, I had the biopsy, which unfortunately showed a 75% malignancy.

After some research, I chose to have a (robotic) radical prostatectomy, where the post-operative biopsy showed an aggressive cancer very close to the edge, but luckily within the margins. Previous finger (rectal) exams did not suggest any earlier (insurance covered) PSA test, so I am grateful that my 'age fifty' insurance guideline was in effect. I would even say that assertively lowering the recommended PSA screening age to 40, could give a man better preventative options, especially for those at higher risk of prostate cancer.

I am aware that the PSA test isn't exact either, it has its limitations, but it is one of the few tools we have that can aid in early prostate cancer detection. The PSA screening, a simple blood test, was the red flag (not a problem creator) that saved my life.

Donna

I have lost one brother to prostate cancer at the age of 57. By the time it was found it had spread to his bones, lymph nodes and ultimately brain tumors. If the doctor had only done a PSA test when he first had symptoms or more importantly if it had just been a routine test for him like a mammogram is for me, would he still be here with us today? But he has saved his younger brother's life.

At age 49, our younger brother had been tested for a couple of years now and when there was suddenly a rapid rise in his PSA level was immediately sent to urologist. After a biopsy the dreaded news came once again. But because they were testing him, it was caught in very early stage and he opted for radical removal of the prostate and a month after surgery now is doing fine with no complications. He will continue to be watched to make sure there is no recurrence.

William

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in May of 2005. 3 of 12 cores were positive, Gleason 7 and a high PSA of 50. I had robotic surgery in September of 2005 and my PSA has been 0.01 or lower ever since. Thank God to some terrific surgeons and the PSA TEST. This test is the best that we have at the present time. Why not keep using it. I could see stopping its use if you had something better to replace it, but you don't



Mark

My eldest brother was diagnosed with prostate cancer that had spread beyond the prostate over 8 years ago. Since that time, I was taking my PSA twice a year. And once my PSA showed some erratic readings, I went to a urologist and had a biopsy. In addition to twice a year PSA readings, biopsies and a PC3 test, a cancerous sample was discovered on one of 16 samples extracted. From that, I decided to have my prostate removed. The cancer was contained inside the prostate. I've had two PSA readings since surgery and the cancer is undetectable. I will need to take PSA tests for the rest of my life to determine if the antigen is present or detectable.

Edwin

At the yearly physical in November of 2005 I was told that my PSA had jumped two points in the last year and was sent to a urologist. He did a biopsy and said that I had two cancerous samples. Therefore I had the prostate removed in March of 2006 and the post-

surgical biopsy once again confirmed two areas of cancer with Gleason scores of 3-3 and 3-4, respectively. The urologist has kept taking PSA readings which were essentially 0 right after surgery and have risen to a 0.2 now 5.5 years later. I am thankful that the PSA test helped us find the cancer and that the urologist still has this tool to follow any changes.

John

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in March 2010. Because I had established a baseline PSA at 50 years of age, my velocity indicted a problem. A biopsy led to a Gleason score of 7(4+3) and a comment from my urologist that my intermediate aggressive cancer undiagnosed would have led to my death in 3-5 years. After much research, I chose to use proton radiation. Thanks to the PSA test and my outstanding treatment, my PSA is down to 0.9 and my long term prognosis is excellent. I have no side effects 15 months later and I have much to be thankful for, especially my yearly PSA test.

Anonymous

When my husband's prostate cancer was discovered, his PSA was already over 100. He was 58. He had a pain in his back and we learned that tumors were rampant up and down his spine. 3 years earlier, his PSA was "normal." After numerous treatments and clinical trials, he died at age 59.

His was, obviously, the more aggressive form of cancer. But, with annual PSA tests, we might have caught this and treated it in such a way that he would still be alive today to enjoy his grandchildren, and continue to give back to the world that had given him so much. I'd rather err on the side of caution when it comes to PSA testing as I so wish we had done. I miss him terribly.

Rick

I will just tell you of my experience. I went for a physical after not having gone to the Dr.'s for a few years. He ordered a PSA and it came back at 4.5 I had no symptoms except a bit of urgency and getting up at night a few times. Checking back on earlier PSAs I found that I had slowly been rising. My urologist ordered a biopsy and I was diagnosed at 61 and had surgery just before my 62nd Birthday. I chose the robotic radical surgery.

I was staged T3a, with a Gleason 6 (3+3). Bone scan was clear, as were the lymph nodes but the cancer had progressed beyond the capsule. I have continued with twice yearly PSAs which have remained undetectable. I have elected not to have radiation unless the PSA begins to rise again. I am very glad my Dr. ordered that PSA as my father Kidney Cancer at 50 and my mother had Breast Cancer.

Anonymous

My prostate cancer was diagnosed when I was 60 years old. I am now 73. The PSA tests indicated that my PSA score was rising over a 24 month time period. A biopsy was performed and the cancer diagnosis was confirmed. I was treated by Brachytherapy (radioactive seed implantation). This was followed up by External Beam Radiation treatment for six to eight weeks.

Since the treatment, I have had my PSA tested, initially semiannually and then annually, and so far my PSA score has been negligible. I have had no side effects from the treatments and so far I am doing well. I am still sexually active but at a reduced level and with the help of Viagra. I don't know if the reduced sexual activity is the result of the radiation or if that is what naturally happens at my age.

I am distressed that there is little more knowledge about the appropriate treatment course now than when I was diagnosed 13 years ago. Men today face the same difficult and stressful dilemma when trying to decide what is best for them. Bottom line for me is that I am pleased that the PSA testing helped find the cancer and that my treatment appears successful at this point.

Richard

The PSA test saved my life. I tested positive 10 years ago at the age of 58 and had surgery to remove my prostate. My father died of prostate cancer. I am thankful that my PCP insisted that I get a PSA.

Robert

PSA testing saved my life. My usual line is "My wife saved my life." I was 59, had shingles and hated going to the doctor. She made me see her internist. He couldn't cure the shingles, but, since he answered to my wife, he gave me a long overdue complete physical including a PSA test. A few days later, he called and said my PSA was somewhat high. It was probably nothing, but he thought a biopsy would be a good idea.

I put off going to the urologist for a few months because of work, holidays. Again the urologist said it was probably nothing, but he recommended we check. I agreed. The procedure, to take a dozen samples from different areas of my prostate, was unpleasant, but not awful. The pre-test anxiety was actually worse than the biopsy. I left pretty confident that we were done with medical stuff.

The urologist called on a Friday afternoon and asked me to come right over. My wife met me at the office. The doctor seemed upset as he told us that the test was positive. In fact, cancer was found in almost all samples and the Gleason score (a severity measurement) was 7, moderately high. At that point, my cancer was considered to be Stage T2 (on a scale of T1, least severe, to T4, most severe).

The urologist briefly outlined the range of choices I had to deal with this news – ongoing monitoring without active treatment, called watchful waiting; various surgical

approaches to remove the prostate and, if necessary, surrounding tissue; or radiation treatments. Other treatments, such as chemo and hormones, probably would be considered if one of the first three were not successful. He suggested that we do some research on our own, talk with our internist and think it over.

After much reading, talking, conferring with other doctors, we decided on radical prostatectomy, surgical removal of my prostate. During the procedure, the surgeon found that my seminal vesicles, outside the prostate, were also cancerous and removed them as well. Fortunately no lymph nodes showed cancer, reducing the risk of further spread. The stage of my case was changed to the more severe T3bN0 because it had spread just beyond the prostate.

During follow-up testing a few months later (PSA again), it was discovered that I still had cancerous prostate cells active somewhere in my body. After conferring with my wife, surgeon, internist, and a radiologist, I began radiation treatment. My oncologist also offered me the choice of joining a clinical trial using chemotherapy and hormone treatments, the theory being that this would preemptively kill any remaining cancer before it had a chance to reestablish and spread. Again, my wife, my internist and I discussed it, and we decided to proceed.

Each of these treatments was unpleasant, to say the least. The surgery left me frightened, miserable for weeks, and exhausted for months. The radiation sapped my energy. Each chemo treatment made me mildly ill for a few days and twitchy and irritable constantly. The hormones induced a true male menopause – weight gain, hot flashes, moodiness, lost libido, wrecked skin, fatigue, which lasted three years. The combination of treatments left me with mild, but long-term digestive complications and a concern about possible further negative effects down the line, because of the radiation exposure.

I wouldn't change a thing. I hate the treatments side effects. But everything tells me that, given my condition, as demonstrated during surgery and follow-up tests, my cancer was serious and aggressive. If it hadn't been caught when I was 59, it is highly likely that it would have spread, made me very ill and substantially shortened my life.

I am now 64 years old, and this month I go back for my five year follow-up tests. Every report so far has been clean – undetectable PSA. I hope, and expect, that this one will be the same. If it is, we will quietly celebrate. I relish the time I have now, and plan to keep on having, with my wife, our sons and my new grandchild. If the test does indicate a recurring cancer, we will talk, research and think, and then decide what is best to do.

A positive PSA test did not make me undergo any of these procedures or treatments. I, my wife, my family, my doctors talked, thought and made decisions that seemed right for me. I weighed and decided to take the risks associated with each test and intervention. I cannot be sure that my cancer would have spread, just as I cannot be sure that it will never recur. But the first PSA result gave me information that started me on the decision track.

It appears clear from recent research that PSA data is far from perfect. It cannot tell whether the elevated numbers are a normal high or a true sign of pathology. It cannot tell whether a cancer it does reflect is fast or slow growing, or just how aggressive it may

become. But without the test, I never would have started down the path that found my fairly dangerous cancer and gave me, what I believe, is my best shot at a longer, healthier, happier life.

I know that there are numerous false positives on PSA (and maybe false negatives), and that even a follow-up biopsy can result in complications. But the PSA is just a number, not a mandate. The test gives the patient, his family, his doctors, information, limited though it may be, and the freedom to make a decision. Lack of that number just leaves us in the dark.

We need much better tests, and better ways to use the PSA and other tests that we currently have. But until we do, I want the opportunity to find out my PSA and make my own decision as to what is next. I want my sons to have that same choice as well.



David

In late 2010, based upon higher than normal PSA numbers, my family physician suggested I meet with a Urologist. Further testing by my Urologist led to a biopsy in early March... a non-too pleasant experience with a great deal of pain, swelling, and a visit to the emergency room, catheter placement for two days and blood in my urine for several weeks.

On April 1st, 2011, I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer.

As a relatively young man in my early 50's, you can imagine that I was quite devastated.

Men of ALL ages over the age of 49, until a better method is found, GET YOUR PSA TEST ANNUALLY. And if you are diagnosed, do your research. Meet with multiple urologists and radiation oncologists to determine the best course of treatment for you.



Kathie

I fully agree that the PSA test is far from perfect but right now it's the best early indicator available. Had my husband had a PSA done we would no doubt still have him with us but unfortunately that is not the case. If I could have him back with impotence and incontinence I would be thrilled. My nephew and my brother-in-law both had early detection followed by surgery and I know their families are beyond grateful for testing.

Paulie

My dad survived prostate cancer in the 1970's. Let's just say the treatment has changed radically since then. My mom survived breast cancer twice so I knew my "cancer clock" was ticking. My elevated PSA in 2010 required a biopsy, which found localized cancer. After a radical prostatectomy, follow-up PSA's show no reoccurrence.

So if I didn't have the PSA results, I wouldn't have had the biopsy and I wouldn't have detected the cancer and I'd be walking around with cancer today, ignorant but hardly blissful.

Now I'm a happy grandpa of 3 with one more coming in December. Thanks to PSA testing, I have a chance to watch them grow up.

John

I had my routine physical in September 2007. As part of the blood workup, a PSA was done and the results came back high. After 30 days of antibiotics to rule out infection, the level increased. I was referred to a urologist. Once established at the urologist, a biopsy was done. 9 of 2 cores came back positive with a Gleason score of (4+3) =7. Being young, I opted for a prostatectomy. The post op results confirmed the Gleason score and the tumor involved 60% of the prostate. I am nearly fully recovered at 7 months post op. The PSA, in my opinion, saved my life, and just one life saved is reason enough to encourage testing.

Everett

In 2005 at the age of 52, I decided to ask for a PSA test as I noticed that I was having a couple of the symptoms that Joe was writing about. The PSA test came back with a Gleason score of 8.0 and I immediately have a Biopsy which came back with 8 of 12 samples with a positive reading. I immediately after speaking with my Urologist had Surgery to remove the Prostate and here I am Cancer free today.

I still have PSA tests annually to endure that the Cancer has not returned. A couple of years ago my 44 year old brother also was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer after a PSA test and also is Cancer Free. It would be a shame to do away with the PSA test. I would highly recommend it to any male over 50 or earlier if there has been a history of it in your family.

Anonymous

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at the age of 46. The disease was already in the lymph nodes beside the prostate when I was to have surgery. An earlier PSA screening might have save me from struggling with disease for the last 20 years.

Paul

I was totally shocked when I found out that I had been diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009 @ age 57. There were no symptoms, but the PSA was increasing at double the normal rate. An initial physical exam did not show any swelling or abnormalities. On the biopsies 2/10 showed cancer. Since my cancer was aggressive, I had a radical prostatectomy. The biopsy of the removed prostate had shown the cancer to be confined to the prostate. Surrounding tissues had not shown any cancer.

Over 2 years later I am cancer free. I have had no incontinence problems but I still have a problem getting an erection. My urologist and I are working on this problem and there are solutions for this problem. I'm grateful the cancer was removed. Prostate cancer is so prevalent today, that screening is a must.

Paula

My husband is active duty military and he was scheduled for his annual physical when a co-worker suggested he ask for a PSA test. My husband was 38 years old and had not experienced any symptoms of prostate cancer so we know it was divine intervention because my husband listened to his co-worker's suggestion. He asked for a PSA test not at all expecting the results would have any major findings so when the doctor told him his PSA level was 4.6 we were shocked. He was referred to a urologist who within a 3 week timeframe retested his PSA which was now 4.8. The urologist put him on antibiotics to rule out an infection.

After another 3 weeks and antibiotics his PSA was taken again with no change. The urologist scheduled him for a biopsies. The results of the 14 samples showed cancer in 12 with a Gleason score of 6. In March 2011, my husband had his prostate removed by robotic surgery. Two PSA tests later and his PSA is ZERO!

John

I need to tell my story. I am a healthy 50-year-old guy with a wonderful wife and two kids ages 6 and 8. I also have a great job as a builder in South Dakota. Life is good, things are going great, or so I thought.

I was diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer in late August 2010. My whole life changed! I feel as though I have a new purpose in life, that new purpose is to educate every guy out there about prostate cancer, what it is, why it's important to be checked every couple of years up to age 45, then every year after that, and how to avoid getting this cancer.

My wife says, "John has cancer, but cancer doesn't have him."
The PSA test helped diagnose Prostate Cancer in me. For three years my doctors did not do a PSA test so the cancer grew and spread. Once a PSA test was finally done it confirmed I had prostate cancer. A PSA of 1770 this test is so important to all men.

Anonymous

After hitting 50 years old I started getting PSA tests. At 53 my PSA started to rapidly rise. Doctor order further tests and Prostate Cancer was confirmed. I was operated on and have been Cancer free for over 10 years. The tests help save my life and I am very thankful they were available.

Although there are side effects, they are better than being dead in my 50's. I believe PSA testing is to men what breast cancer screenings are to women.

Sandra

Men have a right to know what is happening within their body and then to make informed decisions. It is condescending to say that you want to eliminate PSA testing because of the problem of overtreatment. It is our job as advocates to see that men and their physicians have the best information available so they can decide on the best course for themselves.

My husband elected Active Surveillance (then known as watchful waiting) and when after a few years his numbers suddenly began to rise he made the decision to opt for surgery. Though 73 at the time of his treatment, his Dad had lived to 94 and I think that sometimes we forget that men live longer lives than what was expected years ago and have a right to avoid the horrible death of prostate cancer.

Lee

A friend of mine was diagnosed with Prostate cancer after changing his internist. His previous one didn't "believe" in PSA's but his new one insisted on it and my friends PSA was quite high.

Meanwhile my wife asked me "what's your PSA?" My response (I was 56 years old, it was 1997) was "what's a PSA — and furthermore what is the prostate". I didn't even know how to spell it (and I had a PHD in biomedical engineering : - (. Anyhow, I asked my Dr. what my PSA was, he said it was fine, but I hadn't been tested for two years so I went in and got the PSA test. My internist called me, saying that my PSA had risen considerably and I should go to a urologist. The urologist did a return PSA a few weeks later and it was still a bit high (5.6 if I recall).

He couldn't find anything with a DRE but suggested that I get a biopsy. I read a bit about prostate cancer, spoke to a few colleagues at the University who had been diagnosed with Prostate cancer, and decided the likelihood of complications from the biopsy (when done by an experienced urologist) was quite small and worth the risk of finding out more about the state of my prostate. The Dr. called me and my wife in (a companion is a must to here somewhat complex and anxiety raising reports) and told us that there was considerably malignancy in several of the Cores — I think the score was 7.

He suggested I consider the alternatives — surgery, radiation, watchful waiting and gave me articles to read. The urologist told me that I had a couple of months to decide

what to do, that there was no reason to rush into a decision. I spent the next couple of month's reading all I could, looking on the web (there was a great site — I forget the name), speaking to people — there were more men out there than I realized who had been treated).

That was 13 years ago, so far so good. I had a recuperation of a few months, my sexual prowess isn't the same, and I get to see my grandchildren every few months. I RESENT these statisticians twisting reality and telling us we shouldn't try to know what we can from a PSA test. They have never claimed it has no value, and they are right that it can be "misused" if men are frightened into a premature decision based on fear. But I decision to go with ignorance and no have regular PSA screening is at least as bad as jumping into treatment without careful consideration. We are not number and we have a fundamental right and obligation to seek knowledge and use it.

Do I trust all urologists and their conclusions - NO — but on average I trust their approach and experience far more from the kind of number crunchers making up these public health task forces.



Donna

My husband was diagnosed at age 49 with Prostate Cancer. The cancer had already spread to his lymph nodes and seminal vesicles. My husband was a Vietnam Veteran and was exposed to Agent Orange.

If we decrease PSA testing, then other Vietnam Veterans will do without Veterans benefits for themselves and their families.

So many men resist testing based on fear of side effects of treatment. We don't need a system that will increase that number.

My husband died at age 64 of Prostate Cancer.

Daniel

If it were not for the PSA test I would have PC still to this day. I count myself very lucky and blessed that I can be called a survivor. Early in 2011 I had finally decided to see my family Dr. about my need to urinate several times a night. I figured that it was due to a stricture in my urethra, something that I had been diagnosed with many years ago. Of course I was wrong; instead my family Dr. says I think you probably have an enlarged prostate. So he sets me up for a PSA test and a follow up exam. So I go get my blood test and just figure hey I'm 49 an enlarged prostate is no big deal they got pills to fix that.

About a week later I see my Dr. and he tells me my PSA is 3.7 which are not critical and most likely not a big deal but refers me to a Urologist. So I go to see the Urologist we talk about my symptoms then he does a digital exam which he says everything feels normal. He tells me that he would like me to get a fragmented PSA test and explains to me that it is more in-depth and will give him a better idea of what is going on.

Again I go along my merry way thinking all is good and won't be long till I get some pills to shrink my prostate and I will be able to sleep through the night. I go back to the Urologist and he says I have some bad news you have a 50/50 chance of having PC. Needless to say this shakes me up a little but I still think things will be fine he never felt any abnormalities on the digital exam.

So I get scheduled for the biopsy and go back for the follow up. Again he tells me he has some bad news for me it is confirmed I have PC. I at this point am in shock, how come the digital exam never indicated a problem. I ended up having my prostate removed in June of this year and my 3 month PSA came back 0. I am a firm believer in the PSA test. I hate to think how long would it have taken and when it was discovered would it have spread. I know that from the time my urologist told me that I had a 50% chance of PC till he told me I was PC free was some of the most agonizing months of mine and my family's life.

Rudy

A rising PSA number – from 4.8 to 5.6 – over the course of a year led to a biopsy in 2005 and a finding of prostate cancer. I had surgery: Gleason score was 7 (3 + 4), with a cancer cell on the margin. The PSA test saved my life. I had no symptoms. The test also saved the life of my father and two brothers, all diagnosed with prostate cancer with no symptoms. My father, diagnosed in 1981 underwent radiation treatment and is still alive today at the age of 87.

Anonymous

Today I am prostate cancer free. But only because a PSA test revealed its attack very early. A boyhood friend had his PSA test too late; he is now dead. We are/were in our late 70s. Did the study group determine what percentage of men who had PSA testing and discovered the disease early, died anyway? What percentage lived a longer life? This is not the way to reduce health costs!!! I encourage all to argue strongly in favor of PSA testing with their physician

Bryan

If not for the fact that I had a PSA test at age 46, I would be beyond the point of no return now at the age of 50. I had no symptoms or signs of Prostate Cancer at the time. As a result of the PSA test. It was determined that I had Prostate Cancer. The cancer had leached out of the prostate. At that time I had surgery to remove the prostate and also had hormone and radiation in the 3 years following that. Went to my doctor on Oct., 2011. As of right now, I am cancer free. I think the PSA is a vital tool in early detection of Prostate Cancer.

Paul

PSA testing saved me from prostate cancer hurting my other organs. I had no other symptoms except for this abnormal rise in my annual PSA score. In turn, the PSA testing led me to prostate core sampling which diagnosed the cancer and allowed me to be successfully treated.

If you wonder, would I have surgery again having had the expected reduction in potency? Absolutely! It comes down to having a healthy normal life rather than dying from an undiagnosed cancer.

Now feeling healthy again the PSA test is my one source to learn if the cancer is in-check. An escalated score for me without a prostate would indicate floating remains of prostate cells –perhaps cells that are affecting other organs. In all, the PSA test means security — security in knowing I'd have other options if my numbers spike.

Many of the articles I have read against PSA testing fail to acknowledge the following:

a) The PSA test is the only prostate health indicator we have at this juncture and testing is not invasive.

- b) An abnormal PSA score does not lead automatically to treatment – a biopsy confirms or refutes the presence of cancer. In my case the biopsy showed cancer growths (and later the surgery showed the cancer to be even more pervasive than the initial biopsy).
- c) The PSA only provides the patient with a series of options to which he is medically entitled; it does not mandate surgery or radiation. In my case –as well as the majority of my prostate cancer survivor peers—the options were clearly explained for both treatment and for non-treatment (active surveillance being among the viable protocols to consider). No one path was imposed in the cases that I know personally.
- d) And Post-surgery, PSA checks are the only litmus test to find if the cancer is in-check or metastasizing. Again if the cancer continues to grow, the physician gives us options. Instead of eliminating PSA testing coverage why not increase awareness and education regarding prostate cancer?



Louise

My dad had PSA test reading high so sent hospital. Consultant performed biopsy results on 12th Oct 2011 cancer! This test contributed 2 loud alarm bells for our GP. Dad is currently waiting for the results of a MRI, then, possible treatment. All family shocked and numb but positive on outlook. Prostate cancer testing is a must!

Anonymous

Due to early detection in my mid sixties', following annual PSA tests, my prostate cancer was detected at an early stage and, using brachytherapy, the cancer was dealt with before real harm could be done.

My annual PSA's show that, after 6 years, there has been no recurrence of cancer.

Kelly

I was having my PSA checked annually. For years it remained around 1.0, then one year it jumped to 2.9. My Urologist did a biopsy and it came back positive for cancer. My Gleason score was 6 with a 3+3. Had I not been receiving regular PSA exams my cancer would have been missed. A 2.9 score is not unusual for a 55 year old. Having a history of my PSA scores for my doctor to use as a tool to decide to biopsy or not saved my life,



Steve

I was 53 when I was diagnosed with PC. I was without symptoms and if the PSA test wasn't there I wouldn't be here today.

Kathy

Hi, my name is Kathy and my father, 73 yrs. young now, has prostate cancer. He was diagnosed 3 yrs. ago w/metastatic prostate cancer. His doctor did a PSA test and it was 4 or 6. His doctor never pushed to have it further investigated because he thought it was ok, my father was older and didn't seem concerned.

BUT it was a concern. Two yrs. later he was having problems with his back, and eventually found it had spread to his spine (vertebrae). We all thought that his back was just acting up again. We were all so wrong. His PSA had gone to 94.

If his doctor would've pushed and said it was a big deal and stated it should be lower.....it would've been found early and never would've metastasized to his spine. PSA testing is all we have currently to help detect prostate cancer early, IT IS IMPORTANT!!! I look at new research continually to try and find new treatments that may cure my dad before it's too late. He is the most wonderful giving and fair, honest man I have ever met.

So many know and love him and I share his name DAD because so many don't have a dad like him. I wish I could come home from work for the next 10-20 yrs. to have a beer with my Dad but I am sure our time will be shortened because this doctor didn't push his PSA results.

Charo

In 1999, when I was 54 years old, I had a PSA test completely on my own initiative at a lab that didn't require a doctor's order. Had the blood test done because a close friend had just had a prostatectomy for prostate cancer.

My PSA was 13. Took the test results to my family doctor who did a DRE and referred me to a local urologist. Had a palpable nodule on the left side. First biopsy was negative. Six months later second biopsy was Gleason 3+4=7.

Imagine where I would be today without having had the PSA test done at 54 years of age in 1999 with the cancer on the verge of escaping the prostate capsule shell.

Also imagine if the cancer had been discovered earlier how much better my erectile function would be with two sets of nerve bundles spared instead of only one.

Anonymous

Nine years ago I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and chose laparoscopic surgery to remove it. I may have chosen another treatment, as I look back, given the after-effects of surgery, but I am free of cancer as a result. Without the PSA test and biopsy, I would not have known.

My father-in-law died of prostate cancer due to the fact that his doctor never tested for it. How many others have had the same fate?

I am a survivor because of it.

Don

In 2004, I had some of PSA tests that showed the level rose from a baseline of about 2.0 to 3.5 to 4.8 in the space of 8 months. I had a biopsy done by a urologist and the result was that several cores had a Gleason score of 3+4. I elected to be treated. Without the PSA tests, I would not have known of the presence of tumors.



Bob

I feel very fortunate that my family doctor, upon seeing my PSA results, referred me to an excellent urologist for further testing and consultation. After long discussions doctors, friends, and family I decided to have a radical prostatectomy. I was 51 years old and I did not want to risk having the cancer spread. My tests in the four years since have been excellent, and should the cancer ever recur I know I still did the right thing.

Roy

My father developed prostate cancer before the institution of PSA screening. Therefore he had the disease and didn't realize it. It wasn't until he had a fall and x-rays of his hip indicated that he had developed prostate bone cancer. I remember seeing those x-rays and the pain that I felt.

I watched my dad being consumed by the disease for approx. 8 months. I remember, towards the end of his life, praying that the good Lord would take him and relieve him of his pain. In my heart I feel that if PSA screening had been available, the disease would have been detected and I would have had my dad with me a few more years and he would not have had to have gone through the pain that he did.

I have recently been diagnosed with prostate cancer and am in my 4th week of beamed radiation treatment. I feel fortunate that I had the PSA screening available. Without it my urologist would not have suspected cancer, I did not exhibit any symptoms, I felt good. History could have repeated itself. Thank you PSA screening. It may have saved a lot of heart ache.

Leo

My prostate cancer was detected by a PSA test in August, 2008. I have had four biopsies since then, and it thankfully has not progressed since then. While I do believe in the test, I also know that so many outside factors can influence the numbers (sexual activity, bike riding, and infections from a biopsy). My advice would be not to take a sudden rise in the PSA results as a clear indication that the cancer is spreading, but until another more accurate test comes along, this is what we have.

Jim

I had a PSA count of 10. One year later I was 10.1. I then decided to get a biopsy done. I had no symptoms. I felt great. But the doctor told me I had cancer. My Gleason score was 7. After speaking with them and reviewing my biopsy, they said if I do nothing, my life expectancy would be 5 to 8 years. I chose to get operated on. It has now been over 10 years. My PSA is now 0.

I feel the test saved my life.



Anonymous

My father was diagnosed with prostate cancer using a PSA test. He did not have signs or symptoms that would have prompted testing if it was not routine. To the best of my knowledge he had never heard of prostate cancer, he simply asked the doctor to do “whatever is recommended for a guy my age.” (Late 50s at the time). His PSA was elevated. Subsequent tests showed that when he was diagnosed, the cancer was aggressive and had already advanced.

With cutting edge care he survived the disease for another five and a half years. For these years, I am forever thankful and I firmly assert that these years were made possible by a PSA test that prompted the diagnosis and allowed him to obtain the treatments that prolonged his life.

While I understand that we have a long way to go in understanding this disease, in improving diagnostic procedures, educating providers and patients about their options, and ultimately advancing treatment and prevention, without PSA testing there is no other mechanism for early detection of prostate cancer save a DRE which can also be

subject to error. We need both tools of detection at this time until better measures become available. We need to do everything we can to make sure that men have a chance to fight the disease. Access to the PSA test is part of that.

I am thankful that my dad had the PSA test. I believe it ultimately enabled him to choose treatments that extended his life. I wish the same for other men who may face this disease.

James

In March of 1994, my PSA reading, while still within the “normal” range, continued to show a rise in three consecutive checks, each less than 6 months apart. My urologist suggested a biopsy....not something one wants to do, but I agreed. The samples came back positive for prostate cancer.

Also, a Gleason score of 4-5 accompanied the results. Conferring with the urologist and getting a second opinion, I had choices: surgery, or watchful waiting. It did not take me long to realize that I would have the surgery. I had the surgery in May of 1994. Side effects were minimal and of short duration.

Watching over my health in subsequent years, my PSA once again showed a slight increase 14 years after the original surgery. “Activity” was detected in the prostate bed. I chose at this time to do conformal radiation to the prostate bed. Again, I have no side effects and am enjoying life.

In all of this controversy over PSA testing, I am offering this opinion: without PSA testing, I would not have been diagnosed not only with prostate cancer, but one with a Gleason score that indicated a more aggressive cancer.

David

The PSA test is the best thing we have today to find cancer in its early stages. I have three friends that have benefited from this test to catch it early. For me and my doctor it develops an early baseline so a spike will be detected and we can address the problems early and save my life.

John

I was 64 when my PSA caught my attention by bouncing up and down (it wasn't high but it more than doubled in 7 months). I had no symptoms, and there was no palpable tumor. Based on the PSA results, I decided to get a biopsy, and it showed cancer in 7 of the 12 zones (Gleason 7). I chose to have a radical prostatectomy, and so far (two and a half years later) there's no sign of the cancer coming back.

If I hadn't originally had the PSA data, that cancer would still be growing inside me, and I'd have no idea it was there until it got much worse. And if I weren't monitoring PSA

now, I'd have no idea if the cancer shows up again, alerting me to the need for further treatment.

I know the PSA test isn't as reliable as we'd all like, but it's all we have. It's foolish to ignore the value of this test.

James B.

My PSA was elevated and elected to have a biopsy performed. My biopsy was positive for adenocarcinoma, so I had a prostatectomy performed. I was fortunate to find the cancer at earliest stages, so it was contained within the prostate.

I don't know how they can say that this test isn't useful in detecting cancer. If I wasn't tested with a PSA, I would have had to wait until my cancer grew enough where the MD could feel an abnormality during a rectal exam. If that were to happen, then there's a great possibility it could have spread to other areas of the body. If they take the PSA test away...you're going to see a rise in morbidity and mortality.

Lawrence

I have had prostate cancer for 12 years. I just use herbs to slow the growth of the cancer. PSA has only doubled once in 12 years. When I stopped using the herbs, the PSA goes up one point a month. If I didn't have a PSA test, I never would have known, until too late, and surgery or chemotherapy would have been my only defense and it would have been too late. My PSA is now at 16.7. I am 65 years old

Anonymous

PSA testing saved my life. In 1994, the insurance carrier I had did not approve of prescreening for cancer. No PSA although digital rectal were done, and no mammograms. When I changed insurance carriers, I also changed doctors (PCP) and he indicated my prostate was enlarged, ordered a PSA test, which came back at 20, sent me to a urologist.

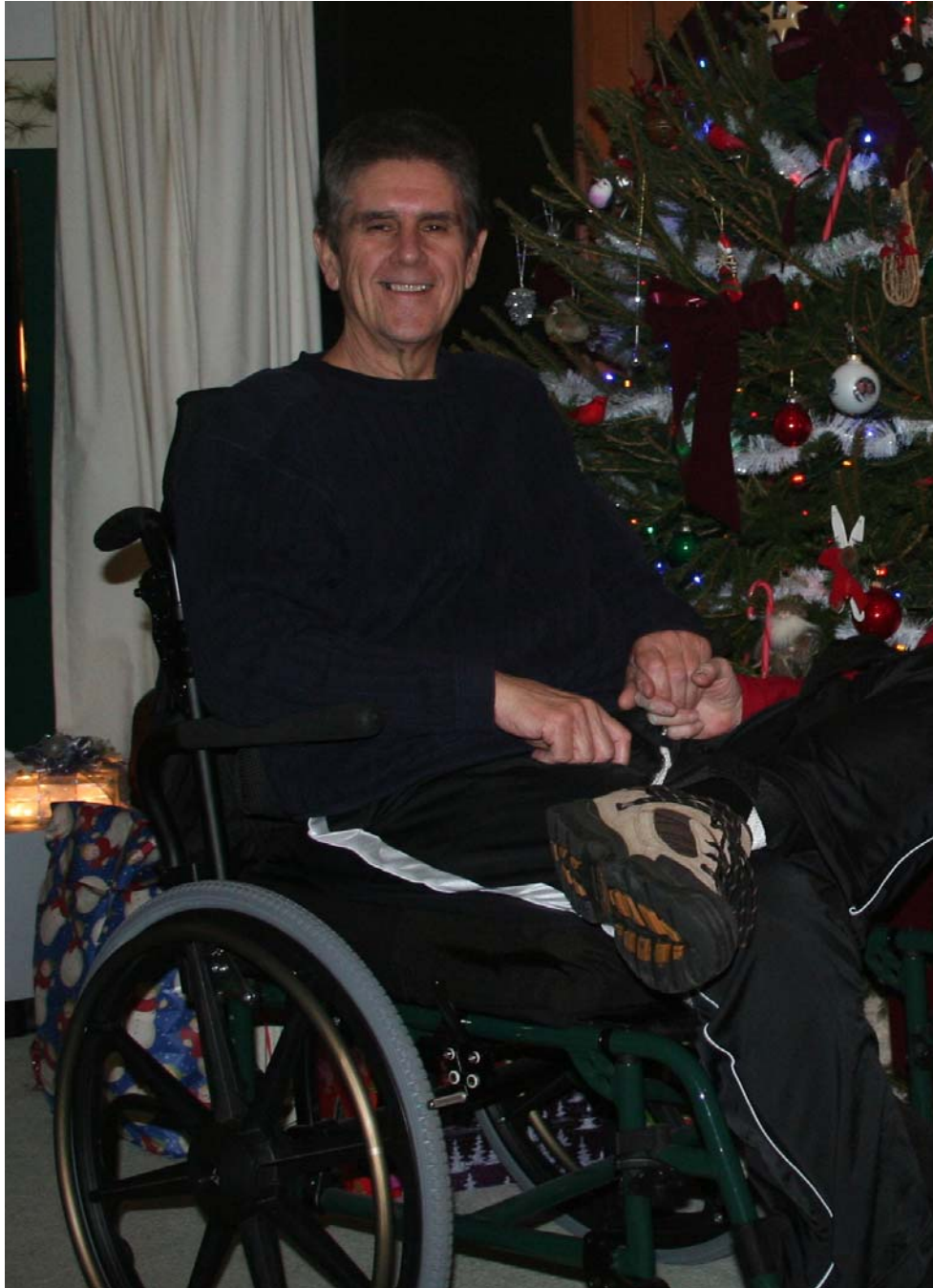
After the biopsy they found cancer, fairly aggressive at age 50. 17 years later, and radiation, clinical trials etc., I'm still here, but I still have prostate cancer. PSA is the only definitive way of tracking my cancer now since I don't have a prostate. If PSA's are abnormal, several need to be done over a period of time to see the rise rate before considering initial treatment.

Lots of factors come into play, including age of patient, history of PCa in family, initial PSA result; even a base line at age 35 would be good to refer to etc. etc.

William

My doctor noticed a steady rise of my PSA levels and ordered a biopsy. I did not have any physical symptoms that indicated anything was wrong. At age 46 I was

diagnosed with prostate cancer and elected to have radiation treatments. If I was not tested the cancer would have spread beyond the prostate before symptoms appeared and my chances for survival would have been greatly diminished. All I can say is that by having the PSA test I have a second chance.



Robert

I am 55 years old man that was diagnosed with prostate cancer in Oct 2009. It was thru PSA screening starting in 2008 that showed my PSA levels rising. My doctor was alarmed enough in the raise from 1 to 4 in one year's time, that he recommended a biopsy. A biopsy revealed that I had cancer in over 30% of my prostate. After consultation with my urologist I agreed that an aggressive approach was needed. I chose to undergo a prostate removal surgery. After the surgery it was found that actually the cancer was in over 70% of my prostate and at the margins.

It was getting ready to spread without any symptoms. If it spread it would probably lead to bone cancer. A year later another round of PSA tests showed a tumor had developed in my prostate bed. Radiation was necessary. I am now one year cancer free thanks to PSA tests and my doctors.

David

My cancer of the prostate was found as a slight elevation in my PSA. The doctor then did a biopsy and found that I was in the very early stages. I was right at 50 years old. My doctor and I elected to totally remove the prostate. I have been cancer free for the past 10 years thanks to the PSA test.

Yost

I was 43 years old when a high PSA result tipped my doctor to the possibility of prostate cancer. After appropriate investigation I had a biopsy that confirmed advanced prostate cancer. The PSA test set me on a course of survival. My partner and I are thankful for the early PSA test.

Mike

I consider PSA testing a very important tool in the fight against prostate cancer. Although I would agree that a better diagnostic technique is needed, until one is developed the use of PSA testing and biopsy when cancer is suspected is a life saver. Diligent application of this technique by my urologist discovered my prostate cancer eleven years ago at age 56. Choosing a radical prostatectomy, despite the potential quality of life risks it posed, is a decision my wife and I have never second guessed and am happy to report I have been cancer free ever since.

The bad decision would have been to ignore my urologist's advice to have PSA testing done because I would now either be dead or facing much more aggressive and quality of life limiting therapy to treat advanced stage prostate cancer. I hope a better technique of detection and staging will soon be developed but until that time don't give men the option of ignoring their prostate health.

David

I thought I was just getting the “old man” syndrome. I would wake up in the middle of the night, sometimes more than once, to go pee. Other times, the urge to pee was so strong; I thought I might not make it to the bathroom in time. When I told my general practitioner doctor about this, he told me to go see a urologist. I was not excited about seeing another doctor. I contemplated putting it off. I am glad that I followed through with the appointment. When I told the urologist the same thing, he told me to get the blood test for PSA. I had not had one before, so this was the first one. It came in at 5. My urologist then did a DRE and felt some firmness in the prostate. He then suggested the biopsy. I was 52 at the time and agreed to the biopsy.

The biopsy went well with no complications. I went back a week later for the verdict. He told me I had prostate cancer and that my Gleason score was 7 (3+4). He then gave me some homework to do by handing me a large package of information. I elected to have my prostate removed using R.A.L.P. Three months after my surgery, my PSA is zero. When it comes to the PSA, I think it is essential. It is too easy to rationalize urinary problems away. In addition, PSA is not the whole story.

There are many men whose PSA is low, yet they have prostate cancer. I know a man like that who has a family history of prostate cancer. Also, take control of your own destiny by doing the research about all of the treatments available and what the side effects are. They are principally incontinence and impotence. Do not let your doctor bulldoze you into a particular treatment plan. Be your own man and make your own decisions that you can live with. Be sure that you find a urologist that is willing to talk about incontinence and impotence and is willing to work with you to get both of those functions back.

The last thing you want to experience is regret over your decision because of a lack of information. Everybody reacts to the diagnosis of prostate cancer differently. If you have been recently diagnosed and have heard the dreaded word “cancer”, I urge you to join a Prostate Cancer Support Group in your area.



Guy

I had surgery over 2 years ago and need to get PSA tests every 6 months to monitor the cancer. Recently, the tests showed an increase in PSA from 0.0, meaning a possible recurrence. It's the only non-intrusive method currently available to check on the cancer's progress.

Anonymous

I started getting PSA's in my late 30's about 1 time a year. After 45 my dir. would order them more often due to my family history. I lost several uncles to prostate cancer. Father also had PC, but eventually died from Colorectal Cancer.

My PSA was not very high usually under 3.0 for many years, and then went to 4.8. My internal med Dir. sent me back to Urologist, Urologist started doing biopsies, but there was no cancer, even after 3 subsequent bios'. Then in 2007, PSA spiked again, another biopsy, no sure cancer, but cells that looked "worrisome," according to my Urologist. In Europe, the cells would be considered cancer, but not in the States.

Anyway, he wanted to do another bio, he did (9 months later), and found cancer cells. All of the tests were driven by the PSA test. I had no pain, no symptoms and no apparent problems until the biopsies started.

Even though I am OK now, I always wondered if the repeated Biopsies may have accelerated what may have been a slow growing cancer. I did have a radical prostatectomy and so far relatively few side effects 4 years post-surgery.

Not sure I or my Dr.'s would have caught this had it not been for the PSA test. Again, I had no symptoms only a family history. I do feel like the test may have saved my life, at least from PC. I watched 3 family members die from PC and it is a terrible way to go just like any other cancer.

Anonymous

At the age of 47 I thought I was a very healthy person. I was wondering how my cholesterol levels were so I had some blood drawn and tested. The doctor called me a few days later to say my PSA had gone up from a constant 1.0 to 4.25.

A few months later after much testing I had my prostate removed, it was found to have a tumor that was branching out both lobes and about to breach the outer surface.

It is now over 4 years later and still cancer free, I am sure if the PSA testing did not flag the doctors that there was a problem my cancer would have spent elsewhere, because I felt well and had no indications of any problems. Now I follow with my doctor with just a simple PSA test to see that I am still cancer free, it seems like a very cost effective way to check for a reoccurrence.

Eugene

When prostatic hyperplasia was diagnosed several years ago, my urologist began testing my PSA on a regular basis. Over the years, my PSA kept rising to the point where a

biopsy was indicated. Fortunately, prostate cancer was not detected then, but was sometime later after two follow-up biopsies. At the point of detection, my PSA had risen to 14, and Gleason score was 4+5, indicating an advanced stage of cancer. I'm convinced that if I had skipped annual PSA testing, my cancer would have imploded beyond the point of containment. As it was, my treatment options were now limited to radiology, which along with ADT has kept the cancer in check, so far.

My only regret is that my urologist waited too long to reach a confirmed diagnosis. In retrospect, it would have been wiser to start an aggressive regimen under direction of an oncologist with a specialization in prostate cancer. Sadly, for me it was too late, too smart.

William

I have lost many good friends to Prostate Cancer because it was found too late. The PSA test saved my life by providing early detection and allowing me to have Proton radiation. For the past 7 years my PSA has been about 0.2 ng/ml.

I consider PSA a good low cost and simple screening tool for Doctors to provide early detection of a possible Prostate Cancer.

Mary

My husband's brother was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer at age 48; Mike was 45 at the time. We told his primary doctor and we asked if he could please do a PSA test. The insurance company was not happy about the PSA, even though he has other blood tests every three months for diabetes and heart disease).

In 2008, he was hospitalized for dehydration and his urologist came in the room and told us that my husband's PSA was 4.7, almost doubled from 2.4 the previous year. The doctor emphasized that there might not be anything wrong but he wanted him to go to the office the following week to talk about this. The DRE was negative and the doctor suggested another PSA. The next PSA was 4.87, so a biopsy was scheduled.

A biopsy was done in September, the same day his almost 81 year old dad had surgery. At that point his PSA was 5.5. This biopsy was negative. December PSA was also 5.5, so we decided on retesting in 3 months and then 6 months. No BPH, no infections, etc. so really no other reason for the increasing PSA. PSA went to 6.2 and then back to 5.5, May 27, 2009; the doctor told us he felt a "small hardened" area on the DRE. He suggested another biopsy.

The second biopsy was done on June 2009 and the urologist appointment was June 17, 2009. This time two of ten sites showed cancer with a Gleason of 6. Mike wanted to have surgery if possible because of his age, at that point 58, almost 59 and other medical concerns (diabetes, angioplasty), so he was scheduled for an MRI and bone scan. All the wheels were set in motion on July; his cardiologist gave permission for surgery tentatively until after a stress test. He was then scheduled for surgery on August 2009.

The surgery went well and the final path report showed aggressive cancer, though still confined to the prostate, but throughout the entire prostate. Gleason of 7. Had we waited and followed this “new advice”, we probably would have been dealing with cancer outside the capsule of the prostate and a very different story. Had I not joined a woman’s on-line support group, I would not have pushed as hard as I did for Mike to follow-up with his urologist. I hear stories of many men who did not have PSA tests and then had advanced prostate cancer, men who’s doctors ignored doubling PSA’s, etc. I know the PSA test is not perfect BUT it is what we have for now.

Janet

My husband is 52 he had a PSA of 1.3 last year and now this year it was 3.4 his biopsy was positive and he is having a robotic prostatectomy thank god for PSA tests otherwise we wouldn’t have known and wouldn’t have a chance to fight it.

Philip

I am a 19-year prostate cancer survivor who had three PSA-based biopsies which discovered my GS 4 + 4 = 8 cancer which had metastasized to several parts of my body. Further, I know the toxic side effects from my various treatments lowered the quality of my life.

Nonetheless, I recommend:

1. Men should participate in individual only if counseling is offered.
2. Men between 40 and 75, have a discussion with your doctor to see if you have high risk factors associated with having prostate cancer.
3. Make a choice about PSA testing only after a long talk with your doctor.



Oscar

In 2006 when I was 60 years old I had recently moved to Arizona so found a new primary care doctor. I had my annual physical and that doctor failed to check the box for PSA as part of my blood workup. It wasn’t until the following year when I changed doctors that I discovered this because my PSA came back at 16.1 I said this cannot be possible because I had an annual physical the previous year and nothing was said.

Little did I know that the PSA test was never given to me. So now it was 2007 and I was already a year behind trying to fight this disease. Unfortunately my Gleason score was 10 and I was not a candidate for surgery. Five years later I am still fighting with PSA

scores as high as 988. Thank goodness my second doctor did run a PSA test the following year which is what you would expect on a 60 or 61 year old man as just standard of care practice.

John

Thanks to a PSA Test in December of 2005 when my PSA was 26.4, I underwent radiation and hormone treatments. Since then, my health has improved to an almost undetectable PSA of .02; and my life has been extended.

Anonymous

I am a widow of a man who had Prostate Cancer. His testing was too late, but I definitely feel PSA testing regularly will save men's lives. Don't make it difficult for men to get this test. It may save someone else from becoming a widow.

Larry

I had a PSA test last year. It was elevated. I followed through with a biopsy which confirmed the PSA finding. I'm so happy to know that I am now cancer free!

Darrell

I was diagnosed at 48 with a very aggressive cancer. I had no family history and am Caucasian, so without early testing (my first PSA), I would not have caught my cancer for many more years. But there is no science to indicate that had I not caught it until I had identifiable symptoms, it would have changed anything. I am still fighting advanced cancer eleven years later.

But because I have been active in a support group, I have met dozens of men who never should have been treated, either because of their advanced age and health, or just because their cancer was indolent. Many of these have serious treatment side effects. I also hold the Urologists accountable who talked these men into treatment they did not need.

Julian

At 50 years old a pain in my hip took me to the Dr. so that I could be told that the past 10 years of digital exams had not detected my prostate cancer. Having mets on my hip put me in the category that it was too late to treat. I was given 2 years. Luckily I responded to ADT treatment and I am still alive 6 years later. I can't help but think WHAT IF PSA screening was used with digital screening would the outcome be any different?

Do not excuse away our options to survive and live with dignity. Detection allows us to decide our course of treatment. Our lives, our choices.

Tom

I am a prostate cancer survivor for more than nine years. In August 2002, I was suffering from exhaustion, going to my family doctor for a physical. He performed a PSA test, revealing that prostate cancer was causing my problems. Otherwise, I was a fifty-eight year old in perfect health. After many examinations, tests, and discussions with numerous doctors, I decided upon a radical prostatectomy. Yes, this terrible disease changed my life, causing me much frustration, but I have been alive. I now have six granddaughters (two born after my surgery), three grandsons (two born after my surgery), and one great-grandson. The biopsy revealed I had the very aggressive cancer, with a three-year survival rate. Thank God for that PSA test.

Harry

I do not understand the furor over a simple PSA test on an annual basis. Most of us in “the age bracket” go for an annual physical exam once a year anyway and give blood for cholesterol tests as well as diabetes, etc. What’s the harm in adding one more check mark on the form to test the PSA levels?

My Primary Care Physician (PCP) noted that for the past two years, my PSA levels had risen and ‘suggested’ that I see a Urologist for advice. I did this even though there was no pressure from my PCP to do so. The Urologist looked at the history and suggested I wait for another PSA test 6 months down the road. When this one showed even more of an increase in counts, he “suggested” a biopsy on the prostate. This resulted in a low level of cancer cells being present at which time he explained all of the options that were available to me.

He did not push me into making a decision for any particular option and after discussions with my wife, I decided to wait and see rather than take drastic and costly measures. It has been 8 months since my diagnosis and I have had a PSA test again after 4 months. There was no change so my doctor will continue to monitor me. At least I know what I am dealing with and the decision is totally mine as to whether to go further with the treatment even though both my Urologist and PCP have both agreed that I have made the right choice at this point.

I thought that the purpose of proactive testing was to prevent more serious complications by not being tested regularly. To not test at all to me seems ludicrous especially in the over 50 group.

Margaret

While PSA is not an end all in diagnosing prostate cancer, it is the best marker we have as yet. I am an advanced practice registered nurse and the coordinator of a prostate

cancer support group. We have members who were asymptomatic, had a screening including a PSA, and were discovered to have prostate cancer.

Charles

I had a radical robotic prostatectomy. My PSA never got above 3.2 but because it had fluctuated between 2.2 and 3.2 the doctor thought I needed to have a biopsy that revealed cancer. After studying different methods I decided on the complete removal because I felt that this would give me the best assurance that the cancer would be removed and it has been 6 years and praise the Lord I'm still cancer free. Also, as a result of my experience, 2 years later when my brother had a similar reading he got a biopsy and it revealed cancer. He elected a different method because of his age and health and today he also is cancer free. Both of us are thankful the cancer was detected early through the PSA tests and appropriate action taken.

Don

PSA testing probably saved my life. Not only was it key in the detection of my prostate cancer, but it was also instrumental in detecting the failure of my primary treatment. To the best of my knowledge it is the only thing that will be able to tell me if there is a return of the disease. I was first diagnosed in 2000.

Lana

Although my loved one lost his life to this dreadful disease, the PSA test was the best measure of how well a cancer treatment protocol was working. It's an easy test to take, and is not invasive. Being a simple blood test, it is relatively inexpensive.

James

A yearly PSA blood test is the only way of catching prostate cancer early when there is time to stop it in its tracks or arrest it for a prolonged period of time. It is the only way to monitor effective treatment. The cost over the long run will be more to treat prostate cancer that is inoperable, (believe me I know!). There would be no known course of action for successful or non-successful treatment. It would not be sound medical practice to suspend PSA testing when it has been proven that it is a "bench mark" for men's prostate health and men's prostate cancer progression.

Kenneth

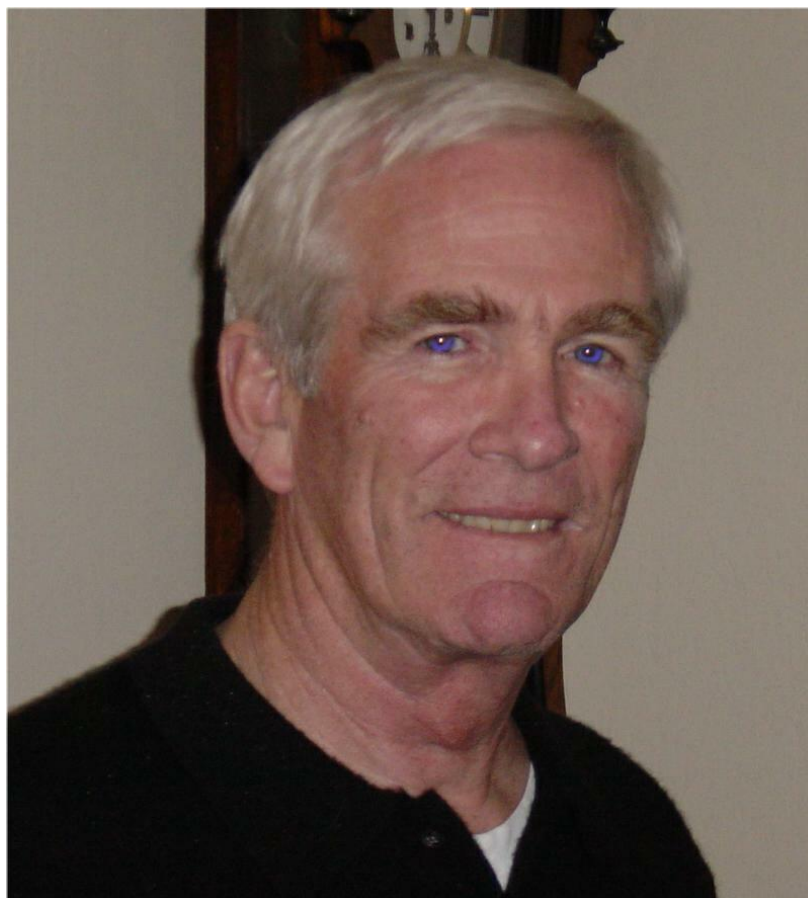
Routine PSA testing alerted my doctor to my prostate cancer (Gleason Score: 7). Even more important in my case, without PSA testing following my prostatectomy, I would not have known that some of the cancer remained and that I also needed radiation.

Anonymous

I am a healthy 55 year old and my last PSA score increased significantly and was beyond the acceptable levels for my age. I went for a biopsy and we did find that I had prostate cancer. Without the PSA score I may not have been diagnosed early and have the ability to take care of this before it was more severe.

Johnny

I have advanced prostate cancer. After surgery 3 1/2 years, I still had a PSA reading. Later, tests revealed it had spread to 5 of my bones. There is no cure but it is being controlled by treatment at this time. The PSA test is very important to me at this time. When I get a PSA reading again, I will know that the treatment is no longer working.



Lawrence

12 years ago my PSA started to rise prompting my doctor to be more concerned about the possibility of Prostate Cancer. In 2001 PSA was high enough to warrant a Biopsy which came back positive for prostate cancer; I had a Gleason score of 8. I was 59 and made the decision to have the prostate removed. The PSA stayed low for 5 years and then started to rise. In 2005 I had another biopsy performed and confirmed that the cancer was in the prostate bed. I took radiation treatment for that and after 5 years my PSA has started to rise again. I am on a wait and see schedule. At some point I will start hormone treatments.

If it had not been for the initial PSA test, the cancer would have probably spread and I would be in worst shape today. I had no Symptoms and felt great. Would never have had had the biopsy if it had not been for the PSA.

Ed

Early in my prostate story, the PSA test was beneficial. As the level kept rising over the years, cancer was eventually diagnosed through my second biopsy, at age 50. This is not to say I'm a fan of the PSA test – more on that later.

After diagnosis, I waited 16 months before agreeing to surgery – very actively trying to find alternative therapies through which I could avoid surgery. Eventually, when my PSA level climbed to 14.0 I agreed to the surgery and had my prostate removed. My PSA story after surgery has an entirely different flavor to it. It began to rise slowly each time I was tested, to an eventual level of 0.14. Not a significantly high number, but the concern (my doctor's mostly) was that it was always increasing, not fluctuating up and down.

Here's the most negative aspect of my PSA experience. At one appointment, my surgeon told my PSA level had risen from 0.14 just 3 months ago, to 0.24 currently. A very fast rise, and cause for panic (again, on his part, not mine). At his recommendation, I scheduled an appointment with the radiologist to go over options. When I came in he said "I see your PSA has risen to 0.18." Long story short, the 0.24 was incorrect – no one knows where that came from. The actual level was, indeed, the 0.18 as quoted by the radiological oncologist. Angry that they couldn't get their numbers straight, I demanded another blood draw that day, and that level showed up as 0.16 – decreasing for the first time since surgery 2-1/2 years prior. Three months after that, my next and current level is down again to 0.14.

My biggest issue with all this is the fact that based on this incredibly flawed blood test, in combination with the error in recording the level; I was strongly being urged to "sign up" for 38 consecutive days of radiation treatment. And no one could understand why I was saying no!

There is currently a lot of press on whether or not to get a PSA test. That shouldn't be the question. It's all we men have to choose from right now, so of course we should get tested. The more important question is why isn't there more funding to find an accurate

test for prostate cancer so we don't have to continue mutilating our bodies with unnecessary biopsies, surgeries and radiation.

Daniel

I was diagnosed with stage 2 Prostate Cancer in 2002. The evaluation of the PSA enabled my Urologist to do a biopsy which got me a 5/6 Gleason score and made the decision on what type of treatment I would seek. If the digit test was the only method being used I would have not been so lucky. My Urologist and my second opinion Urologist both advised me the gland was soft and pliable showing no signs of nodules. If it was not for the PSA test my outcome would not have been so good. Now, coming up on my 10 year birthday, I get a PSA test each year to stay informed of any possible reoccurrence. I'm one of the lucky ones.



Scott

I am adamant that men should receive the PSA test starting at 40. In October, 2010, when I was 47, I had symptoms (slower urinary flow, pain during sex- sorry, no delicate way to put it) that two doctors diagnosed as a double hernia. The doctors did not consider

cancer as a possibility because I have no family history and I am, otherwise, exceptionally healthy. When I still had symptoms three months after the hernia surgery, a third doctor finally ordered a PSA screening. 18 was not the number I was looking for from my first PSA but it's the one I got.

Over a 3 month period, I had 2 more surgeries (including an open radical prostatectomy) and countless MRIs, CTs, and PET scans (including an endo-rectal MRI that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy). The cancer had spread to my seminal vesicles, nerve bundles, and lymph nodes. Many local doctors viewed me as a lost cause. Through tireless research, my wife and I found two doctors who were willing to aggressively treat my cancer post-surgery. I am currently on more medications than I care to count and am almost finished with 54 sessions of radiation treatment. The obvious side effect of the prostatectomy and hormonal therapy is the end of a normal sex life. To remedy that, I most likely have another surgery to look forward to.

I believe this ordeal could have been greatly minimized if my internist would have started annual PSA tests at 40. It is likely we would have caught this cancer when it was still contained in the prostate. That would have greatly changed my course of care and had less impact on the quality of my daily life.

Steve

In 2006 at the age of 52 I had my first PSA test; I really should have done it earlier even though my DRE's previously indicated nothing of concern. My PSA was 14.8, in a couple of month's it had gone up to 15.8 and my Gleason Score was 7. With an intermediate stage of cancer my treatment options were limited; if I had gotten tested a couple years earlier I would have had more options available to me and a higher survival rate. If it wasn't for the PSA test I could have easily died of this disease.

Anonymous

I had no symptoms, no physical complaints, an active sex life and no urinary problems. I had a digital rectal exam, and was pronounced fit as a horse. My blood was then tested, for the first time, and I scored a PSA of 8 at age 53, followed by a PSA of 12 one month later. Following an ultrasound and a 12 core biopsy, I am now diagnosed with Stage 1 prostate cancer, with a 90% chance of recovery. I will forever be indebted to my wife for insisting on the PSA test.

Ben

PSA testing has benefits for non-PC patients as well. My PSA jumped 750% in 6 months. That fact, plus having a familial genetic predisposition for PC, made my urologist retake a PSA reading 6 weeks later. The second reading showed a much lower level. With this newest result, along with a normal DRE and no other discernible cancer

characteristics, my urologist was able to tell me that the temporary PSA spike was most likely attributable to other causes in spite of my genetics. What a relief!

Hugh

While my PSA wasn't highly elevated, it was a warning sign. A digital exam then revealed the tumor.

A subsequent rise in PSA after a radical prostatectomy indicated a recurrence. My Gleason score was a 4+3=7, so my cancer was moderately aggressive with a positive margin. If my cancer had not been detected early, I am convinced I would be in trouble now.

I feel very strongly that the PSA tests should be continued. Early detection is critical. I am grateful that these tests have led to my diagnosis and treatment.

Frank

I understand that some believe PSA testing results in unnecessary worry and biopsies.

The problem with not being tested, in a timely manner, is that the Cancer may escape into the bloodstream. That was true in my case so even after surgery and radiation I now have cancer in my bones. With early detection a cure is available and it is irresponsible to suggest that PSA testing should not be encouraged and continued as a first line of defense.

Ed

I will be 50 in May, 2012. In late December of 2006, I went to an Urologist after seeing blood certain mornings after intercourse the previous night. He performed a cystoscopy and found "calcium stones" before the urethra. It was a relief; however the blood never completely disappeared. In January of 2008, my primary care MD wanted to send me for another scope, but chose to include a PSA in my annual blood workup due to my indifference to the pain that that procedure caused.

The number came back (3.0) and we waited to do another PSA test in 3 months. Because that new number was over (5.0), my results were sent to an urologist and I was instructed to schedule an appointment. Foolishly, I waited until October to call the urologist, ten months after the initial (3.0) PSA. While on the phone, the office collected the file and told me to "get in there" immediately.

A "finger" exam resulted in a follow up appointment for a biopsy. Within a week, I was back in the urologist's office, with my wife, hearing that 2 tumors were close to the inside wall of my prostate. I listened carefully to my options: 1) Do nothing, 2) Radiation, 3) Prostatectomy, and 4) Computer-assisted laparoscopic radical prostatectomy (CALP). I chose CALP on December, 8 of 2008.

Post-surgery, I wore a bag for 2 weeks, followed by Kegel exercises using Biofeedback and electrical stimulation for 8 weeks. Sexual function came back almost immediately to 100% and PSA has been (0.0) to (0.1) ever since. Early testing = early detection!

Claude

My PSA test resulted in a biopsy. The result of that revealed prostate cancer. I was treated for it. That was in 2006. To date things are normal. Do I believe in PSA tests...you bet I do.

Anonymous

My PSA has to remain at 0.01. I get tested every six months, due to a stage 3a tumor back in June 2006. My cancer had positive margins but after a radical plus forty days of IMRT radiation and fourteen months of hormones we have cancer free results no problems with other functions. My doc was very steady! I know the PSA test plus the digital save my life! We know that the doubling time most important. My PSA test the test that tells me if something is brewing.

Bill

I am six year survivor due to the PSA and robotic surgery. Since the surgery my PSA has been 0.1. If it were not for a PSA, I'm sure the disease would have advanced to an untreatable state. I realize the PSA may not be totally accurate but it is by far the best test we have at this point

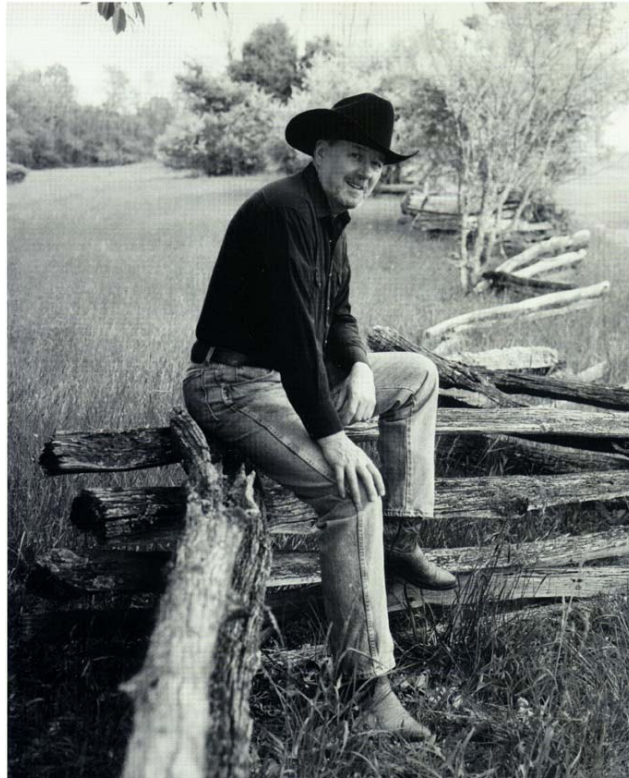
Robert

My cancer was diagnosed by DRE because my provider did not do PSAs. My first was 11.8 which put me at risk for spread. After radiation treatment my PSAs were low for 10.5 years. I could measure a trend line and when the doubling time got to 6 months even though the PSA was low I had an evaluation and found micro-mets on the surface of my lungs.

Current treatment keeps the PSA low but without it, I would have no way to know when this treatment fails and when I would need further therapy. I am 14+ years out from diagnosis and at age 70 in good health I still have a life expectancy of 5-10 years. I would like to avoid the painful death that men experience when prostate cancer is not treated.

James

When my PSA count had doubled within 6 months, my doctor ordered a biopsy, which showed a malignancy with a Gleason score of six. I had it treated with cry-surgery, and am cancer free after 5 years!



Anonymous

My husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer at an annual physical. He had absolutely no symptoms. Only the rise in his PSA alerted my internist. His PSA was only 3.2 (within normal limits, according to the lab), but our internist was concerned about the velocity of the rise within just one year. His cancer was aggressive, and broke through the capsule. He had NO SYMPTOMS!!

There was no doubt in our minds regarding our choice. He was 57, and we decided on surgery. The side effects were not even a consideration....to us, the choice of life was more important! My husband, his father, and his grandfather all had prostate cancer.....what about our 2 sons? Are we to take away our only option of early detection for these two young men?

It is an archaic myth that prostate cancer is "slow-growing". In the year 2011, are we to believe that there is only ONE type of prostate cancer?? With the level of medical research and technology today, together with the genetic analysis of prostate tumors.....how can a global statement be made that "Prostate cancer is slow-growing, and most likely is not fatal"? Until another diagnostic test is available, the PSA must be given to all men yearly.....especially men with a family history.

Jorge

PSA is the ONLY test we have regardless how flawed it is. Thanks to PSA I was able to discover cancer in my prostate and have it removed while the cancer was contained. Otherwise I would be a candidate for early death due to prostate cancer....

Pinky

Prostate cancer has changed my life forever. Having hormone resistant prostate cancer is the pits. Very few options for me. If my doctors had found it earlier it would be a much different scenario than I am now facing. GET TESTED EARLY!! It may save your life!!!!

Anonymous

Went in for a vasectomy at 47 years old. No history of prostate cancer in the family. The urologist suggested a PSA test as part of this normal treatment plan. Result was 2.5, biopsy followed which confirmed cancer. Given the fact that I was under 50 with small children and a good prognosis, prostatectomy was the recommended procedure. Fully "recovered" 2 years post-op, but sex life sucks. Don't know if I would have been better off just waiting and seeing giving the high rates of indolent prostate cancer.

Jerry

PSA TESTING PROBABLY SAVED MY LIFE! At 55, my PSA nearly doubled (6.5); I went in for a biopsy and only one core was cancerous. Gleason on it was shown @ 3+4! (REMEMBER THAT) I had surgery within a month. FULL BIOPSY SAME BACK AT 5+3! LUCKILY ALL MARGINS & NODES WERE CLEAR! I'm coming up on 3 years since surgery and PSA is undetectable! I have a 24 year old son and I now should have many years to enjoy his talent thanks to PSA testing!

Anonymous

Late 1992, I got under care of a new GP. Had been on Medicare about 3 years. Was told that I could have a general checkup annually. My new Dr., who had just begun practice, and was a member of my church, asked if I had ever had a PSA test. I did not know what it was. He explained it to me. I said, ok. Came back elevated, sent me to a urologist, and digital exam indicated possible malignancy. Went in for a biopsy, PSA was elevated from about 10 days before.

Opted for a surgery. Gave my own blood for about a month, and had surgery. PSA had gone to 18. Said He did not get it all. Had radiation, all this was after Jan 93. PSA now is .1. Had I not had the first PSA, which as I see it, is what the brains are saying the y won't pay for, I most certainly would have been terminal. It was in the lymph nodes, but not beyond them.

This is only the beginning. In my case they have been almost 0 before. 19 years is pretty good.

David

I agree that this is the only test we now have, and should continue to be covered by health insurance companies to allow men the opportunity to be as well informed about their health as possible. At any rate, it saves the insurance companies in the long run, by often detecting cancer early, so that possibly less drastic treatment options may be administered, and with a more positive outcome.

A better test WILL be discovered, and it will become incumbent upon the insurance companies to cover that one anyway, and for the same reasons.

David

My father died a horrible, painful death from metastatic CaP in the era when it was a “quiet disease”. Considered just a disease of old men who didn’t talk about it. Being forewarned, I got early PSA testing in the mid-90 and survived the disease.

It will be criminal to now begin discouraging men from being tested.

What happened to the mantra “Early Diagnosis, Best Chance for Cure”? As much as PSA has shortcomings, it is STILL the canary in the mine for CaP detection.

What is needed is MORE RESEARCH to allow diagnosis better than PSA and DRE. But instead, we get anti-screening messages the results of which will be MORE DEATHS from prostate cancer.



John

In 2004 my primary care physician referred me to a urologist for minor pain in the prostate area. The urologist prescribed three weeks of antibiotics and when I still was having symptoms, he blamed it on my bicycling activity. He wanted me to schedule another appointment, but didn’t explain why. I cancelled the appointment and accepted his bicycle explanation.

Two years later I went to a new primary care physician for a routine complete physical. I may or may not have mentioned in my family history that my father and my maternal grandfather both had prostate cancer. My new doctor included PSA in my blood work. My PSA was 32. The doctor treated me with antibiotics (same as I had two years earlier) to see if it was an infection, then retested the PSA – the result was the same – 32. My doctor then referred me to THE SAME urologist that I went to two years before.

This time he recommended a biopsy – result was relatively aggressive cancer (Gleason index 6-7.) I never challenged this urologist for his poor communication or for not checking my PSA two years earlier, but I switched to a younger, more proactive urologist for my radical prostatectomy and subsequent monitoring. CAT scans did not find any evidence of cancer beyond what the doctor removed during surgery. However, three years later my PSA began rising and doubling fairly quickly.

The ONLY conclusion that made any sense is that there were still prostate cancer cells in my body. I went through eight weeks of radiation therapy on my pelvis in spring of 2010. I am now facing the strong possibility that I will develop systemic prostate cancer. No further surgery or radiation will stop it. There is no effective chemotherapy for prostate cancer, so my best hope will be to slow cancer growth through hormone therapy – with side effects probably worse than I have experienced from surgery and radiation.

My point in this detailed story: If my PSA had been checked in 2004 (when I most certainly already had prostate cancer) then I would have been treated two years earlier – and would have definitely have improved my chances of avoiding systemic cancer. COMMUNICATION is the key on this subject.

Men need a better understanding of what their prostate does; the difference between aggressive and non-aggressive cancers; and to understand their treatment options and long-term side effects. If your doctor is a poor communicator, find another doctor.

The PSA may not be perfect, but it is currently the ONLY early detection screening tool. The results of a PSA screening are simply the starting point for medical investigation – not the conclusion. And since there is NO CURE for systemic prostate cancer, wouldn't you rather take the chance on incontinence and impotence over DYING the horrible death that systemic cancer ultimately poses? I know that I wish I had asked more questions in 2004. It is critical that each man understands in detail how the PSA works and the varied directions that further analysis might go.

A prostate biopsy is no walk in the park, but it is the ONLY way to find out for sure if you have cancer. And without the PSA, how would you even know that you might have a problem?

Paul

I was 46 when diagnosed with PCa. Had my doctor followed the usual protocol? I'd be dead by now. I was healthy. No family history that I knew of. Fast velocity – all the bad stuff.

The PSA test saved my life.

Vale

If it weren't for PSA testing, I'd likely be dead or dying now. I was eventually diagnosed with prostate cancer–after a PSA test, then biopsy–at the age of 49. By the time my surgery came around, the cancer had already begun to spread beyond the prostate.

Had that initial PSA test not been done, the cancer would have spread unchecked. The PSA test helped save my life.

James

My PSA was on a regular check given the swollen prostate. Suddenly the count jumped from a 2 to a 3 in a 6 month period. The one point spike was of concern to both me and my doctor. It stayed at the 3 when checked again in 3 months, Biopsy revealed cancer in one core out of 12. Gleason of 6. My Dad's brother had prostate cancer 13 years earlier and it had escaped to his bladder.

My decision was easy; take it out now – a.s.a.p. I do not need to wait and find out a few years later that a cell or two had escaped and the cancer is now in another organ.

Anonymous

I could not get my primary care physician to listen to me when I told him that I had repeated prostate infections. He just kept giving me prescriptions again and again. The infection would clear up and then it would return. I asked for him to send me to a urologist but the urologist was only interested in diagnosing me as having BPH. I did not have the symptoms of BPH, but the diagnosis was kept.

So, I asked for a second opinion. I was sent to a friend of the urologist who was also the Chairman of the Dept. of Urologist at a very famous medical school. This urologist did not believe in using the PSA and he diagnosed me as having a bladder problem. He put me on medication that did not do anything to help with the persistent prostate infections.

So, I went to the VA Hospital and asked them for a PSA. The PSA was 9.6 and I had a previous PSA (at the primary care physician's office) 6 months earlier that was 2.4 So, I hand carried the PSA report to the Chairman of Urology and asked him what it meant. He ignored the PSA of 9.6 and the six month earlier PSA of 2.4 and told me that I had a bladder problem. I persisted and asked for a biopsy by the Chairman of the Urologist Department and he (seemed to be angry) agreed. The biopsy showed that I had stage 3tb prostate cancer.

I referred myself to a cancer center and they started me on hormone therapy, then 3 months later I had a radical prostatectomy followed by 42 days of radiation. The prostate cancer had spread into the surrounding muscles tissue and lower abdomen tissue. They removed 11 lymph nodes on the left side of the abdomen and 12 lymph nodes on the right side before the found cancer free lymph nodes. I have been cancer free for 5 years and am still upset about the way I was treated. I hope other men will persist when they feel they have a prostate problem and get the appropriate health services.

Carl

In early 2008 at the age of 62 I had PSA test that was high. Ultimately I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in April and had a robotic prostatectomy in August of the

same year. I don't know if I would be alive today if that test had not been part of a routine physical. As much as that test created confusion, uncertainty, anxiety and even anger in me, I am very grateful that I had it and that it set in motion a series of events that led to my being cancer-free today.

In addition, I became aware of my exposure to Agent Orange in Vietnam in 1967, something I had no conscious awareness of. This started another chain of events leading me to confront symptoms of PTSD from my experiences in Vietnam, resulting in diagnosis, therapy and ultimately a new acceptance and sense of peace in my life. I connected with the Veterans Administration and now receive most of my medical care from the VA, which does an amazing job of caring for veterans.

Meditation is now an important part of my life that keeps me calm, appreciative and open to love. I will forever be grateful for this new chapter in my life and the appreciation I have now for the wonders in my life, the deep love I share with my wife, friends and family. It all began with a simple PSA test. It saved my life in so many ways that I will always be grateful.

Steven

I would be in a world of hurt today if not for the PSA test. My cancer was diagnosed after surgery as being confined to the gland. However, my surgeon informed me that if I would have waited 12 to 15 months to address this issue, the outcome would have been different and the cancer would not have been localized. Without the screening, I would have never known.

The PSA test is all we have right now and I would recommend that men continue to get tested in order to make an informed choice. Well over 30,000 men die a year because of this hideous disease. I feel I have been given additional time on this earth and it is due to a skilled surgeon and a PSA test.

Nathaniel

A routine PSA test 6 years ago led to a biopsy which showed I had a Gleason score of 8.0. The biopsy clearly showed I have cancer and I was treated and my PSA's have consistently been 0.1. I am afraid if insurance companies stop paying for PSA testing that many needless deaths will occur, especially with high risk groups like African Americans.

Douglas

PSA testing saved my life. I showed no other symptoms of prostate disease. It was normal size with no palpable nodes and I had no trouble urinating. However, there was an increase of my PSA. As a result of that alone, I was biopsied and cancer was found in early stages. The PSA test clearly alerted me that there was a problem. It saved my life.

Terry

In 2003 I took a physical exam which included a PSA test. The results indicated a possibility of prostate cancer. The doctor ordered a biopsy. They took six core samples from different sites on the prostate. Three of these came back as one hundred per cent cancerous. I elected to have my prostate removed.

I get a follow up PSA every six months. There is no indication of cancer now. I am a cancer survivor that's here to say I am alive because I got a PSA test.

Michael

I am a PCa survivor since 2001 (present age 61) Ten years ago I had no symptoms of prostate cancer. I went to a PSA screening event at work for testing. The digital exam (DRE) was "questionable", in the doctor's words, but the PSA was higher than normal (5.7) After another PSA was done (6.0) a biopsy confirmed the presence of cancer. I had an open prostatectomy done (4-2-01) to remove the prostate and a 1.5 cm tumor was present with a Gleason of 3+3=6. The tumor was contained within the prostate itself but at the very edge. I was lucky.



Anonymous

I understand that the PSA test isn't always accurate in regard to forecasting. But, I can testify that digital rectal exams are definitely not a good predictor. My exams always found my prostate smooth with no abnormalities to the touch and that was even after I had a positive biopsy for cancer. I believe the Task Force is coming down on the side of too many men getting surgery when their cancer level is low (unfortunately not my case). Without PSA screening, I would not have known I had advanced prostate cancer. I understand putting money and effort into a new test, but what do people do now, before the new test is developed.

The answer appears to be some kind of utilitarian Russian roulette. Apparently for the majority, who do not have advanced, high risk cancer, best not to know you even have it, so there's no worry or unnecessary procedures. John Stuart Mill and Mr. Spock would undoubtedly approve. If you are in the minority and have a more advanced type, well, better to be in the bliss of ignorance on your track to death. At what point do you even verify if someone has advanced prostate cancer?



Anonymous

I am now a 66 year old male, thanks to a random PSA screening advertised in the local newspaper.

My story begins in 1999, after hearing of a friend's cancer (not knowing anything more than that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer – and not knowing a thing about the prostate) I called my friend out of concern for his health.

My friend shared with me his problem and suggested that I get a PSA test. I told him that I had been in to the local HMO for my regular physical just a couple of months before and was told that I didn't have any problems with my health. He said that he knows that the HMO, by policy, didn't screen for prostate cancer and that a PSA blood test was an important screening tool. I said ok and dismissed it thinking that I might remember for my next physical.

A month passed when I noticed a full page advertisement for a free Prostate Cancer screening, and thought "this seems to be rather timely" So I called the number and scheduled an appointment to be screened.

The day of the screening I was instructed to fill out a health questionnaire and that I would give permission for a blood draw and an interview with the urologist where he would perform an exam called a DRE (digital rectal exam). OK with me, after the blood draw I was examined by the doctor and while performing the DRE the doctor let slip an 'oh - oh' rather audibly. I asked why the oh - oh, and he said something to the fact that he might have felt something, but that the blood test would provide more information.

A couple of weeks later (actually April 1st) I received a phone message from the medical assistant instructing me of my PSA reading of 29.8 and that I should consult with my own urologist at the HMO.

Following my visit with my HMO urologist, and the results of my prostate biopsy and additional tests, I was presented with my own disturbing information that I not only had prostate cancer but a fairly problematic challenge. The diagnosis was that I had a Gleason 9 disease, and further tests had shown that it had escaped the capsule (spread beyond the prostate organ). Additionally, my prognosis wasn't all that rosy. The Doctor told me that based on the outcome of the treatment that they could only guess that I would have about 8 months to two years before I would fall to the disease.

The good news is that I (after a couple of real emotional months) I was able to put a thoughtful process to work on learning more about what my 'competition' to life was about, and also learning more about finding the "A-Team" to treat my disease. I know that the goal of this report was to present the importance of PSA screenings, but a secondary level of importance is WHAT TO DO with the information. First, don't be satisfied with the status quo. Learn more about your personal situation, and act on your own instincts by getting 'seconds' opinion. I personally interviewed 6 different doctors, with varying specialties.

I wasn't originally a candidate for radical prostatectomy, and actually was about to undergo external beam radiation. However, due to extenuating circumstances and an

excruciating SIM experience. I was offered an option of undergoing the radical prostatectomy, leaving the external beam radiation as a trump card to future treatment options.

Tammy

My only brother, now 55 yrs. old, had done asbestos removal in the 70's. Many years later, he contracted Mesothelioma and had to quit a very good job as a Systems Engineer for a major company in NYC. This also led to his divorce. It had gone into remission, I guess, for many years. In that time we had lost contact of each other until recently. He is now dying from Prostate Cancer Stage IV and couldn't get a PSA test until it was too late. Nothing more can be done for my brother at this stage in his life as he has about 16 months to live.

Joseph

My PSA reading was 5.1 taken during a routine physical to renew my other prescriptions at 59 years old. I then had a biopsy which found that I had 8 out of 10 core samples positive and Gleason score of 7(3+4). I had open surgery to remove my prostate and now 18 months later PSA is undetectable. I have had no incontinence issues from about 3 months out but still have ED issues that I can live with.

Anonymous

Without my PSA tests I would not have found cancer within my prostate. Without the tests over the years the cancer would have spread outside the prostate and I might not be here today to write this message of importance. I had radiation seed treatment and my PSA today is at 1. I hope that it continues to drop below 1. Very important for all insurance companies to recognize that while this is the only test that we have today, it's a good one.

Anonymous

I believe that the PSA test saved my life. You cannot tell me that the test has limitations as well as benefits. The sudden rises in my PSA lead the doctors to determine that they should look deeper into the problem.

Edward

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in July of 1993. I had a routine physical in which my PSA was measured and came back with a value of 13.6 ng/ml. A biopsy proved that I had prostate cancer. I choose surgery which had a 50% success rate for that level of

PSA. The surgery failed to remove all the cancer so that I went on intermittent androgen deprivation therapy. I found this therapy very caustic to tolerate and, changed to a Mediterranean diet, lowered my body weight according to my body Mass Index (BMI), took supplements that also aided my immune system to keep the prostate cancer in check. Today my PSA has stayed between 2-3 ng/ml the past 6 years.

Felicia

Without PSA testing my husband's cancer would not have been detected. Even though he was in the normal range his levels have doubled from last year. Our Dr. sent us to a specialist who did more testing and we found he had cancer. Once he had the surgery not even 3 months later it was found to be mildly aggressive and near the bladder. Thank God for PSA testing.

Anonymous

At the age of 44, I went to a urologist because of some cysts on my testicles, which were nothing more than epididymis cysts which were nothing to be concerned about unless they got larger. The urologist asked me if there was any history of prostate cancer in my family, and I said "yes, my father and both grandfathers were diagnosed with prostate cancer in their 70's and 80's". As a result, he recommended a PSA test. The results of the PSA test were relatively high (especially for my age), which led to a digital rectal exam where he felt a hard spot on my prostate. This led to a biopsy, which led to a diagnosis of very aggressive prostate cancer.

I had a radical prostatectomy at the age of 44! With my family history, I always figured I would end up with prostate cancer in my 60's or 70's, but certainly not at age 44! After the surgery, the surgeon told me the pathology results of my prostate indicated that there was even more cancer than they originally expected, and had it not been removed; I WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD WITHIN TWO YEARS! I was VERY fortunate that this was caught early (because of the PSA test), and I did not experience ANY of the typical side effects of the surgery (impotence and/or incontinence). PSA TESTING SAVED MY LIFE!

Had I not had that PSA test done, I wouldn't be writing this today. Need I say more?

Neil

Having had several DRE's done and always being told everything felt 'normal' I insisted that a PSA be done. That initial test came back without clarity, so I had another done a couple months later. It had gone up. Another 6 weeks later another was done and it had gone up significantly. Due to this a biopsy was done and it came back with 4 out of 10 samples showing cancerous cells. I then had a Radical Prostatectomy done and after receiving the results of the test done on the capsule it was determined to have been a moderately aggressive cancer.

I'm convinced that had I not had a PSA done I would be battling a cancer that may have become much worse or may have even killed me. That was 3 years ago at age 53. Don't let PSA's be pushed aside as if they are not helping diagnose such a devastating disease.

John

Our health department conducted a health fair. A PSA was part of the blood screening. My PSA came back 4.3. I found out I had prostate cancer and this test caught it. I would be dead now without the PSA test. Anybody not getting screened at age forty is playing is gambling with their life.



Bruce

At age 50 I went to my doctor for a routine check-up. He suggested getting a PSA test, I agreed. At the time I didn't even know what a PSA test was. The test came back 4.00 and was tested again which came back 4.80. I was sent to a Urologist where a biopsy confirmed that I had Prostate Cancer. If I had not had this PSA Test I would not have gotten the needed treatment. My PC is aggressive and needed to treat accordingly.

Michael

At age 57, I sought PSA testing against the advice of my primary care physician. His digital prostate exam had found no evidence of a lump or nodule. With a PSA that had increased from 3 to 5.5 over the past year, I had a biopsy that showed a moderately aggressive prostate cancer. The recommendation from the Urology/Oncology Center was for surgery. My prostatectomy revealed a 2 cm tumor that was described as very large. (2cm seems small but is apparently large for a prostate cancer.)

Almost six years later, I have had no recurrence. I continue to check regularly with PSA testing. PSA testing, against the recommendation of my primary care physician saved my life.

George

I'm a Prostate Cancer survivor.

I was sure my high PSA meant nothing as no one in my family has ever had Prostate Cancer, but turned out with a Gleason 6 & Robotic surgery. At age 66 I'm totally Cancer free, but would have otherwise never known. I pretty much owe my healthy life to the PSA test.

Life is good.

Anonymous

My brother's life was saved because of this test. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer and because he had been getting the PSA test yearly his cancer was found in its early stage and successfully treated. Today he is cancer free.

Anonymous

I lost my Dad to prostate cancer 3 1/2 years ago. Although he had routine PSA testing, the prostate cancer he contracted was a very aggressive one. He fought hard and bought us another year together. If it had not been for PSA testing, I wouldn't have had that extra time with my Dad that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Anonymous

I was diagnosed with moderate growth cancer at age 65. My primary care doctor was concerned about my PSA level and sent me to a urologist. The digital rectal exam showed a problem with my prostate. The biopsy showed cancer in 9 out of 14 samples and getting close to the seminal vessels.

Radiation was effective with minor side effects. If I had not had the PSA and DRE I would have problems now 5 years later. I have not personally known any woman that died with breast cancer, but I have known 3 men that died with prostate cancer. Two of the men never had their PSA done until the cancer had spread. They might be alive today if they had had the PSA and DRE tests done earlier. The one who had it done; saw a large increase in PSA from one year to the next. He was able to get treatment that added a pain free year to his life.

Anonymous

Without PSA testing my husband would have died a lot sooner than he did. It's not the PSA testing that you have to worry about it's some of the doctors out there. What do you want little problems or LIFE?

Donald

I have a dear friend whose life was saved by a routine PSA test that led to a diagnosis at age 50 of a fast-growing cancer. He had no symptoms of any kind, so absent the PSA he would not have known until probably too late for the surgery that came before metastasis, surgery that saved his life.

My wife's best friend's brother has essentially the same story.



Al

After several increasing PSA tests, I had a biopsy that diagnosed me with prostate cancer at age 54. I had a laparoscopic robotic prostatectomy and am now six years cancer free. Without the PSA test I would never have known I had prostate cancer until it was far advanced and would probably die at an early age. It is unconscionable that the USPTF is considering recommending against PSA testing without any alternative screening recommendation.

Louis

PSA testing saved my life! I initially was tested in 1993, with follow-up in 1994. My physician asked me whether or not I wanted to be "proactive" and I said yes; I had no symptoms but my PSA was in the abnormal range. Biopsy confirmed that I had prostate cancer. My wife and I decided upon surgery. I have had undetectable

PSA scores since (except for one false-positive that was a laboratory error), and am 18 years post-surgery. My Gleason score was 8. What I have subsequently determined is that there has been a prostate cancer genetic "relationship" in our family; my father and my father's brother has died from prostate cancer. I had an exceptional primary care

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physician and urologist who worked together with me, explained all the issues, and let me go for a second opinion...and I went with my urologist's recommendation for a radical. I have NEVER regretted my/our decision; my post-surgical symptoms have been minimal.

To recommend against PSA testing is unprofessional. For those physicians who are arguing against testing — just wait until they express symptoms — and then it may be too late! I am a University scientist. Having PSA testing available to me saved my life!

Peter

Without PSA testing, my cancer would have not been caught. While there are real risks to PSA testing, biopsy, and treatment... in my opinion, testing is knowledge and should continue to be recommended and paid for by insurance. This is particularly important for younger men who will likely not outlive PCa.

When a better, more accurate PCa test is available, than switch. For now PSA is the best indicator and should be continued.

Anonymous

At the age of 46 I had a physical, and for the blood work, my doctor checked "PSA".

This was my first PSA test, because typically testing starts at 50. My PSA was high, remained so in a second test 1 month later, then a follow up biopsy detected Prostate Cancer. I'm now approaching 5 years cancer free. If not for the PSA test, I would have not known until much later, risking disease progression beyond my prostate.

Jeff

PSA testing saved my life. Five years ago, I was a healthy 46 year-old guy who exercised regularly and went to regular check-ups. My DRE's were always unremarkable and I had no symptoms suggesting there was anything wrong with me. One day in April I visited a local health fair sponsored by a Denver news channel.

Being a psychologist, I thought I could pick up some interesting information for my clients. I don't exactly like needles, so what prompted me to decide to get my blood checked I will never know, however I have to admit I was a bit relieved, when I was turned away because I had not fasted 12 hours for the glucose test.

What makes my story even stranger is that I went home and researched where the health fair was going to be the next day. I fasted the required 12 hours and traveled to another city where I again stood in line and had my blood drawn.

A few days later, I received a call from a seemingly distressed nurse who informed me that my PSA was 23.4 and that I needed to see my doctor immediately. I didn't even know what a PSA was, at that time, but I eventually learned. Boy, did I learn. Further tests and a biopsy confirmed prostate cancer which had spread to a seminal vesicle. I had

surgery, radiation, and two years of hormone therapy and this summer I celebrated five years of being cancer free. I am alive because of a PSA test.



Doug

In 2004, I had a PSA test. The results were 10 Nano grams/ML, higher than last year's result. I saw a Urologist who scheduled a prostate biopsy for the following Monday.

The PSA done again at the Urologist's office, and was even higher.

Biopsy results were consistent with a DX of Prostate Cancer. Gleason Score=6. The urologist said, "A Gleason Score of 6 is a good score to have." The PSA saved my life; otherwise, I might be fighting cancer at this time. I have high blood pressure. I don't need prostate cancer too.

George

My father died of prostate cancer before PSA testing was available. Due to his cancer the chances of my contacting this disease are double that of the general population.

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So for peace of mind if nothing else I get annual PSA testing which I have started plotting due to my rising PSA numbers.

Anonymous

PSA saved my life. I had no symptoms of prostate cancer. Even after the PSA results it was not easy to detect the cancer through other tests. Given that the cancer was not totally encapsulated and had traversed the prostate lining I would not be alive if it had not been for the PSA warning.

Andrew

Imagine at 46 years old how shocked I was to find I had prostate cancer. It was only through my work physical that included a PSA test that indicated there was a potential problem. The digital rectal exam proved to be unremarkable, so the PSA was the only indicator. I had no previous symptoms. I was just there for my mandatory annual physical. Well, after a trip to the urologist and another PSA test I was scheduled for a biopsy which ultimately showed cancer.

I have no family history of prostate cancer, so if it wasn't for my work physical, I wouldn't have gotten a PSA test until I was 50 and who knows how far the cancer would have gotten at that point. As I type my story I am happy to say that I am cancer free. If it wasn't for the PSA test I would be walking around with prostate cancer right now. I, my wife and my three children are all convinced that the PSA test saved my life.

Donna

I'm writing for my husband. He passed away from prostate cancer last December. He was a health young 48 year doctor. He did his lab every year and had a complete physical exam. On his 47th birthday his PSA was under 4. By his 48th birthday, his PSA was 33. Yes men do need to have their PSA done and the screening should start at 40.

We have three grown children. Two are men in their early 20's. They will start at 30 having a PSA test.

William

PSA testing, I believe, saved my life. I was tested and found my PSA level was 6.6. I also had a biopsy and was scheduled for surgery but had a heart attack from which I nearly died. I decided on watchful waiting concerning the cancer. PSA was stable for 3 years upon which time it suddenly went from 6.6 to 10.4. I had nerve sparing surgery 6 weeks later (1998) and have shown no further signs. I have excellent urine control, no incontinence but cannot attain an erection. My PSA is now undetectable for which I am most grateful.



Phillip

This cheap test has saved the life of my both my brother and myself and lack of testing took my oldest brother's life.

Both my brothers live in England where routine testing is not done. Because of this my oldest brother's prostate cancer was detected way too late to treat effectively and he died within a few years of diagnosis. After this experience my other brother got tested and was found to have PC also and is doing well after 7 years. **IF HE HAD NOT INSISTED ON BEING TESTED HE MIGHT HAVE ENDED UP LIKE OUR OLDER BROTHER!**

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James

I would be dead, if I followed the “watchful waiting” advice. My PSA was only slightly elevated, but the biopsy showed intermediate cancer, 7 out of 10 on the Gleason Scale. The PSA was certainly not “false positive” in my case, and likely saved my life. Isn’t it better to err on the side of caution?

George

I am a 15 year survivor without invasive therapy until Cryo 2.5 years ago. I am now 65 years of age and without PSA tests to help me monitor my condition; I do not feel I would have had the same outcome or success fighting this disease as I’ve had. I am still monitoring my PSA on a regular basis and paying for the tests myself on the majority of times. Obviously I feel it is an invaluable resource in the battle against PC.

Alfonso

I believe my statement puts prostate cancer in the right perspective: NFL viewership is 67% male and 33% female, however, this month NFL players are laden in pink uniform apparel and accessories to promote the awareness of Breast Cancer. Statistically, individuals with prostate cancer and deaths caused by prostate cancer are right in line with the numbers for breast cancer. Even more crucial is the behavior of males when it comes to getting check- ups. Most men don’t go to the doctor for routine check-ups even when they have ailments of any variety.

Anonymous

I had never heard of a PSA test when a nurse suggested that I get one. I tested positive for prostate cancer. I am still alive 18 & 1/2 years later (October 2011) because of early detection and the grace of God. I know that early detection saves lives. I also believe that the effort to reduce testing is a Medical doctor’s scheme to treat more advanced patients (make more money). I also believe that the medical community is not actively searching for cures (intending to make more money), causing many males with prostate cancer to die before their time.

Judith

I’m the widow of a fine husband, father and grandfather – greatly missed. Because of an increase in his PSA, he had a biopsy which showed cancer and a prostatectomy in August 2004. The doctor was confident that he’d gotten it all and recommended no further treatment, other than monitoring the PSA. Three years later, it increased to 1 from negligible, and no one sounded an alarm. Three months later, it was 123. Several tests, including a prostascint didn’t show any cancer cells, and an appointment was set up for
THREE MONTHS LATER. That appointment, his PSA was over 1200 and the cancer

had spread to bones and liver. Obviously, I regret letting him leave that day, three months earlier, without addressing the issue of a PSA of 123. I questioned the doctor about it: “shouldn’t he be treated even if no cancer cells are evident?” “Didn’t a PSA that high indicate that something is wrong?” He was reassuring and how we wanted to believe that everything would be okay!! When Bob’s PSA increased from .00- to over 1.00, if we had paid attention and insisted on closer monitoring – never mind if insurance will pay for more frequent tests! – Maybe Bob would still be with us or at least have had more time – to see new grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The best doctors in the world in state of the art hospitals – still make mistakes; they’re only human. Patients and family members need to be informed and their own best advocates, seeking second, third and fourth opinions, if necessary



Maria

My 49 year old husband went in for his "Wellness Exam" in June, 2011 and his PSA came back at 57. One month later he was diagnosed with Stage 4 Prostate Cancer. His cancer has already spread to his lymph nodes, bladder, nerve bundles, and seminal vesicles.

Had his doctor followed up on his PSA test of 4.8 in 2006, my husband would not be losing his bladder and his prognosis would be much better.

The problem is NOT with the PSA test! The problems are with doctors not educating their patients and patients not building upon that education.

My husband had no symptoms other than a mildly weakened urine stream! If he had not had the PSA test, his cancer would still be growing out of control without us even knowing.

Prostate Cancer is NOT an old man's disease! No one in my husband's family has had Prostate Cancer, so there was no reason for him to think he was at high risk.

The PSA test possibly saved my husband's life. An incompetent doctor in 2006 allowed further harm to come my husband's way, not the PSA test!

Anonymous

My father lost his life as a result of failing to have regular PSA test. My grandfather died before available. No matter what is said, annual PSA and exam saves lives.

Gary

My father died from prostate cancer at age 65. I started checking my PSA levels at age 40. In 2006 my levels jumped 3pts. and a biopsy confirmed the worst. Two months later I had a radical prostatectomy and I've never looked back. This year I ran in three triathlons. I'm convinced that the PSA testing identified my cancer in time to save my life.

Robert

I was 49 years of age. My PSA was 4.0 (but had doubled in less than 2 years). The biopsy indicated a Gleason Score of 6 and cancer cells near the periphery of the prostate. Should I have tried watchful waiting? Who on the panel making the recommendations would have opted watchful waiting?

I opted for surgery and have been cancer free (PSA tests not indicating any activity).

Bob

Upon being diagnosed with prostate cancer, I was sent to a urological practice who immediately recommended a biopsy. Following a 9.0 PSA and admonitions from the

doctors after the biopsy, I went through almost a year of seeing all sorts of physicians, all of whom recommended surgery or radiation.

These didn't feel right to me and, as I began to research, I found people who had achieved a good result from supplements and other non-surgical, non-invasive treatment. Only months after consulting a physician who put me on a number of supplements and only two prescription drugs, changed my diet and several other common sense things, my PSA registered 3.8. Since then the PSA reading has varied between that at 5.6. I am convinced that I may well have been much worse off as a whole person if I'd had the surgery.

Seems to me that there's nothing wrong with the PSA itself. It's only a blood test. It's what many on the medical community do with it that is wrong. Having been through my four year experience now, I'm glad to have the PSA. As my doctor has said, "There are many reasons for your PSA to go up, many of the negative, but only one reason for it to come down. Something's getting better."

It's not the test; it's the knee jerk (money earning) reactions of many doctors that cause the negative consequences.

Lee

My dad was diagnosed at age 50. I was diagnosed at 46. Because my PSA was 3.9, my GP referred me to a urologist for a biopsy, which confirmed cancer. If it wasn't for the PSA test, I would have been in big trouble. By the time I started proton therapy 4 months after the original PSA test, my PSA tested at 5.3. My cancer was aggressive.

Yes, there are a number variables with a PSA test, but with a good doctor, proactive patient, and accurate testing, **THIS TEST SAVES LIVES.**

Tony

I was 44 in 2006 when my primary care physician prescribed a PSA test in my first physical since I had turned 40 years old. MY PSA indicated a very high reading at 19.8. After a series of tests and surgery it was determined my case was advanced prostate cancer but still treatable. I have been in remission for nearly five years. I firmly believe that had my cancer remained unchecked by the PCP on that day that I would be either dead or dealing with incurable metastatic prostate cancer today. I think that this is indisputable evidence that screening saves lives and/or at very least extends lives.

Elliot

Due to family history, I had several years of PSA testing every other year starting at age 39. My PSA jumped to 4.0 at age 45, and was climbing 20% per year at age 46. A biopsy showed Gleason 7 cancer. I am now 14 months post robotic surgery with a PSA of

0.01! My urologist was very realistic about the risks of incontinence and impotence associated with each treatment option. He was very clear that erectile function would not improve, and would likely decline. I have no incontinence problems, but I do have impotence issues requiring injections for intercourse. Given the frankness of my doctor, I am overall very satisfied with my testing and treatment experience. I watched my uncle die of PC, and it was horrible.

To me the erectile issues, though frustrating at times, are an acceptable price to pay for the opportunity to avoid that death. I firmly believe that the PSA testing saved my life.

Bill

My PSA went up 2.5 but because it did not pass the computer test of 4.0 my regular doctors did nothing. They only went through the motions of the digital rectal exam. By the time I got to a certified Urologist it was too late. I had the surgery and the radiation but it was too late. My regular doctors than back dated my medical records and now claim that they told me that I had cancer 3 years earlier and did nothing. This is without any biopsy or pathology report.



Kenneth

I was going to the bathroom frequently. Had “start/stop” issues. On a whim I mentioned this to my MD. PSA at 21.6. Then, y PSA rose to 27. If I had waited a little longer, I might not be here now. I’m not a survivor, yet. I’m under treatment for stage 4 prostate cancer. My son has to be tested at age 42. The PSA test MUST be kept for men.

Terry

We have a family history of cancer so I felt the PSA tests were important for me. I had an annual PSA test since my early 50s as part of my annual physical. The result was always in the normal range but increasing slowly.

At age 59 my PSA increased about 50%. My urologist ordered another PSA three months later. My PSA was up another 30% but still in a normal range at 3.9. The rising PSA concerned my urologist and he suggested a biopsy. After some discussion and consideration, I agreed to have the biopsy. 12 cores were taken in a painful but short procedure. Only one core contained cancer. The Gleason score for the cancer was 4+3. This early stage cancer was located only in the right prostate lobe.

My urologist recommended radical prostatectomy (RP). He said that I was in no risk of dying soon. He explained that prostate cancer is usually slow growing but the Gleason score of 4+3 indicated my cancer was aggressive and would be likely to spread outside of the prostate if not treated. The prostatectomy was recommended to improve my outlook ten years and more in the future. Had I been 10 or 15 years older, the doctor's treatment recommendation may have been different. There may have been no treatment at all.

I started researching options. The available literature was all over the place regarding appropriate treatment. I met with two other urologists, radiation and medical oncologists, and other members of a multi-disciplinary cancer team. All of them recommended RP. I eventually decided to have RP but waited for seven months due to other health concerns.

I had surgery in July 2011. The post-operation pathology report indicated the cancer was contained in the prostate. None was found in the lymph glands or surrounding tissue. However, the cancer tumor had spread to the left prostate lobe. 10% of my prostate was cancerous. This indicated an aggressive cancer growth.

I have every reason to be grateful for early detection and treatment of my prostate cancer. No one knows how long would it have taken for the cancer to spread outside of my prostate. If it had spread outside the prostate, treatment would have been much more difficult and prolonged. If I hadn't had PSA testing, the cancer may have gone undetected until it was too late to effectively treat it.

I'm still recovering from surgery. I have slight urinary incontinence and wear a pad for protection. I also have erectile dysfunction (ED). Hopefully both of these side effects of RP will clear up over time. Even if they don't, I have no regrets about choosing RP to treat my cancer.

Judy

My husband's PSA had been steadily rising but the results were simply filed in his charts in the doctor's office and ignored until he began experiencing symptoms that could not be ignored. The "finger test" at the doctor's office left little need for another PSA test; the doctor sent him directly to the urologist who immediately scheduled a biopsy that

revealed “advanced aggressive prostate cancer.” We soon learned that there is a long history of aggressive prostate cancer in his father’s family: at least two, perhaps 3 uncles and his grandfather had had it. (His own father died of Hodgkin’s at the age of 50, “too young” to get prostate cancer.)

His Gleason score was too high for radiation seeds, and attempted surgery proved unsuccessful as the tumors had already spread outside the prostate and were compromising blood vessels and nerves in his legs. Resorting to Plan B, he opted to provide as much help as possible to the medical field by participating in experimental treatment. For eight years he underwent radiation and nine different types of chemotherapy, both on- and off-study. His positive attitude and loving disposition disguised his pain and discomfort as the disease gradually diminished his physical abilities.

We both became avid (if private) advocates of PSA testing, encouraging men to “get tested, learn their numbers, and know what they mean.” I am outraged that the medical profession can even consider limiting or doing away with this testing. I know that it is not always a precise indicator, but it is a crucial indicator and it needs to be done regularly. I will never know if my husband would have lived longer if we had learned of his cancer sooner, but I certainly want my sons and grandsons to be tested regularly. Early detection provides a greater opportunity for crucial preventive measures.

The eight years we had (after his diagnosis) were precious beyond measure. His attitude at the outset was that he did not want to spend his remaining time focused on what could or should have been done—it would not change the circumstances we faced. But there will always be that question in the back of our minds: “What if we had known earlier?”

Tony

On a routine physical exam in 1997, at age 56, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer following a routine PSA test. Fourteen years later, I am still battling the disease, but because of an early diagnosis and treatment, I have survived 14 years and my quality of life has been good. At the time of the diagnosis, the urologist told me—“do nothing, and you will be dead in 5 years”. I had not had any symptoms and would not have known to have any treatment had it not been for the routine PSA test. The test most likely saved my life.

Manny

In an annual check-up my PSA level was a 9 and it continued to rise to a 14 before I had my surgery. I had an aggressive cancer which spread to one of my lymph nodes. Prior to my testing, I had no symptoms and felt fine. My prostate was three times the normal size. After my surgery my PSA was at 4 and continued to rise. My doctor recommended Hormone therapy. Today my current PSA is 0.36. Without a PSA test, I would not have

been concerned about Prostate cancer especially since I had no symptoms or discomfort. I believe this testing helped identify the cancer before it was too late.

Thomas

In 2008, I had my biopsy, which confirmed PCa, and I had a da Vinci prostatectomy on 10/10/2008. My primary care provider had been monitoring my PSA on a regular basis, and the fact that it increased, even though it was not very high in absolute terms, signaled the need for a biopsy. In a period of around 18 months, it had gone from 2.3 to 3.7, an increase of 1.4. He had told me that an increase of .75 in 1 year would be noteworthy.

I had no symptoms, and it had not been detectable by DRE, so PSA screening is the only way it was detected as early as it was.

Jon

The PSA test is an inexpensive way of provide useful information in determining the likelihood of having prostate cancer. After learning that my PSA level was elevated, I had a biopsy, which indicated I had prostate cancer. After much consideration, I chose radiation and seed implant, as a way of treating it, which was successful in my case with relatively few side effects. I now use PSA testing as a yearly post-treatment monitor.

The main argument against PSA testing is that it can lead to unnecessary treatment that can cause more harm than good. The answer is not less PSA testing, but more education about treatment options and potential benefits and side effects so that each man can make a more informed choice.

Jim

PSA testing may have saved my life and given me decades of more time to spend with my family. I had very high PSA readings which prompted a series of biopsies that found Gleason score 7.5 cancer cells. Now the big decision: take care of it or take the chance that the cancer I had was not one of the aggressive types. Playing Russian roulette with my life was not a good choice, so I had the surgery. I had some post-surgery issues, but the trade-off was worth it.

Without PSA testing, I would have never known about the potential for aggressive cancer within me until it had reached the point of killing me. If 5 out of 20 prostate cancers are aggressive, then it might have been a 20% chance of it killing me. I'm glad I knew that I had a choice to make.

Mike

As a prostate cancer survivor who had a radical prostatectomy then had a rising PSA after surgery and went on to have savage radiation, how would I have been able to tell my cancer was growing again if not for frequent PSA testing. And now 7 1/2 years after my surgery I still need to monitor my cancer through PSA testing every 3 months, and this seems to me to be the most cost effective means of doing that.

A simple blood test.

The problem seems to be PSA testing leads to over treatment. That's not due to the PSA test itself, that's due to the medical decision making process afterwards. PSA testing is a great warning tool, and absolutely necessary after prostate cancer treatment to monitor recurrence. When the treat or not treat decision can be accurately assessed and only aggressive cancers treated, perhaps PSA testing will be vindicated and regain its place as the best most cost effective simplest early warning monitor for prostate cancer.

Linda

My husband at age 62 was diagnosed with prostate cancer with a PSA test that showed a higher reading than the year before. It was caught before it was out of the prostate, and after a Radical Prostatectomy, it is now 12 years later and he is fine. The PSA test is not perfect but it is the only test there is right now. By testing early cancer can be detected before it is out of the prostate capsule and spread.

There was no family indication of prostate cancer as his father lived to be a 101 years old. My husband was feeling fine as prostate cancer has no symptoms in the early stages. Only a PSA test and RDE, and then a biopsy found the cancer. It is easier (and cheaper) to treat the cancer in the early stages.

Bob

The PSA test is a vital 1st step in the detection of prostate cancer. During my yearly physical my doctor saw my PSA had increased markedly from the year before. I went to a urologist who upon digital exam felt a lump on my prostate. A subsequent biopsy showed definite cancer. After hormonal and radiation therapy I have been cancer free for 8 years. If I had not had that PSA test as a first step I would not have had a clue cancer was there. PSA alone would not be conclusive, but it is the best way to find out if there is a possibility of cancer and the follow up tests can confirm or deny it.

John

PSA testing saved my life. At 61 I had a slight increase in my annual PSA test level and my primary doctor thought it would be good for an urologist to check it out. After several months of monitoring by the doctor, a biopsy was performed and cancer was the diagnosis. At the hospital, it was determined that removal of the prostate was the best

action to take. Upon removal and testing, it was determined that if I had not had the operation when I did, the cancer would have begun to spread to surrounding organs. Five years later, I am cancer free.



Anonymous

AS the result of a routine PSA blood test, my husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer with a Gleason of 8. He had radical surgery within 2 months. He is cancer free and doing very well. The test saved his life.

The most encouraging follow up to his story, to me, is that by having a PSA test yearly, we will know if the cancer has returned anywhere else in his body. Any cancers cells would still show up in the PSA blood test as prostate cancer. I do not know of any other cancer that would show up that quickly or accurately in a blood test.

Anonymous

3 years ago on my regular yearly physical my PSA indicated a jump from 2.4 to 4.8 in a years' time. I was referred to the Urologist for investigation. At the time I was 57 and had a long history of Prostate Cancer in my family. Grandfather (died of PCa) Father. 3 uncles on my Dad's side and 2 first cousins on my Dad's side. One of them died at the age of 43 from PCa.

A biopsy was done and came back positive Gleason 3+4 and high grade PIN. Discussed treatments and I decided that the best bet is get it out of my body. 3 years out my PSA is Zero the only down side is ED. Which I do not take lightly. I know that this PSA saved me from a terrible progression of cancer in my body. The decision of treatment should be a decision between the Dr. and the Patient not a governmental process.

By the way my 34 year old son already has a base line PSA. He knows to watch it and keep his Doc in the know.

Alex

The PSA test is our most valuable tool to determine the progression of prostate cancer (PC). My PC was discovered during a routine physical which included a PSA test. I was 54 years old and had symptoms I attributed to aging (difficulty urinating) which turned out to be high grade PC (Gleason 9). PAS testing should continue. The results should be handled towards the patient's benefit rather than the doctor's enrichment.

Anonymous

My husband had a routine test of his PSA during his annual physical in December of 2002. It was 6.6 at that time-double what it had been the previous year. He immediately scheduled a biopsy which was positive. We took several months, did a tremendous amount of research, and a whole lot of praying. After talking with both a marvelous radiologist about seed implant and an equally marvelous urologist, we decided on surgery.

My husband had some spread from beyond the prostate capsule to the seminal vessels. He is alive, 9 years later. His very low PSA signaled what we have since found out is an extremely aggressive form of prostate cancer. He recovered very well from his surgery and is completely continent. Since then he has salvage radiation, hormone therapy which failed as he was androgen resistant,

Provenge, radiation for bone pain as a result of metastasis, and he will be starting docetaxel in a week. I can say without a shadow of a doubt that if he had not had that routine PSA and the following biopsy at the age of 57, he would be dead now. It is completely reckless to no longer have a PSA done as a part of routine physicals. My husband was without any symptoms that would have signaled any problems. Yes, the biopsy was an unpleasant experience but death is much more unpleasant. If doctors need more education, educate them.

If patients need more education, educate them. Encourage men to talk to each other.

PSA testing has given my husband 9 years of life; it has given me 9 years more with the love of my life; it has given 2 additional grandchildren time with their favorite guy. We may not have much more time left as his PSA doubling time is now 1 month but what a joy the last years have been and what a joy the time that is left will be.

Jerry

Without the PSA test I would have been walking time bomb, My PSA level went from 1.5 to 5.8 in one year. Had surgery on August 3rd of this year. With no PSA test I would never have known until it was too late. Eliminate PSA testing is like dooming many men to an agonizing death.

Brian

While I myself have not experienced prostate cancer, my dad and oldest brother have. In both instances, the cancer was found after routine PSA testing. My brother chose to treat his cancer with radiation therapy whereas my dad, in his 70's when his cancer was found, chose hormone therapy. Neither of them are completely cancer free and they continued to follow up with their doctors and monitor their PSA levels. I will turn 40 this year and fully intend on insisting my doctor do a PSA test at my next physical exam. I will make sure all of my friends and family does the same.

The medical community (and society in general) provides a very sharp, double-edged sword to men in regard to their health.

On one hand, they are criticized and even ridiculed for not paying enough attention to their health. Yet, on the other, the medical community views men as second-class to women and women's health concerns. How many hospitals can you name with actual physical Men's Health Centers? Men view this mixed message as nagging (which is ignored...) because if their health truly were in jeopardy, surely there would be organizations and programs in place to help support it.

Anonymous

At age 61, I became a patient with PCa [18 bone metastases] with only ADT as treatment, just because my PSA [turned out to be 50] was tested for the first time, having no complaints. Without this and 1 year later I might have fallen in a disastrous complication. I would propose: every man from age 50 every 5 years a PSA test.



Paul

The PSA test was the initial warning that I had a particularly aggressive type of prostate cancer. Shortly after a biopsy I had prostate surgery, at which time it was found that the cancer was even more aggressive (near the upper end of the Gleason scale) than originally measured in the biopsy. That was five years ago. I feel fortunate that today I am still cancer-free.

Rick

DRE was fine. PSA went from 4 to 5. Internist sent me to urologist for biopsy which was positive. Did external radiation. Four years later PSA started to rise to 1. Mets to lung & slightly to bone. Wouldn't have a clue without PSA test.

Anonymous

If it was not for my PSA test, I would have never found out I had prostate cancer, my MD, did not perform rectal exams until after you were 50, I was 48 when they discovered my cancer and without the PSA my cancer would have been much further along until it was discovered.

Anonymous

As a 63 year old man with friends who have prostate cancer, the PSA test gives me some assurance that I am still cancer free.

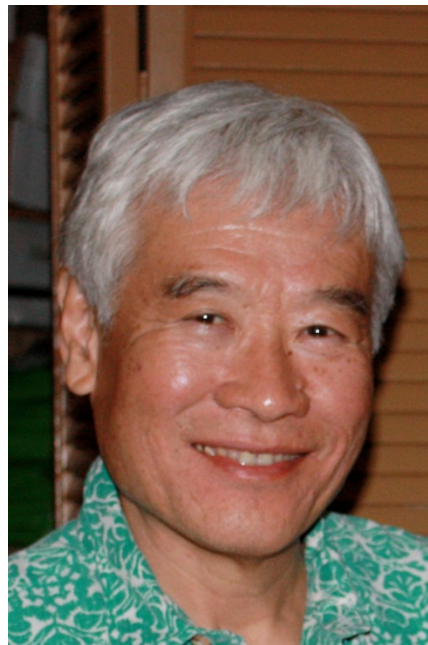
Anonymous

During 2008 I had a PSA reading of 6.2. Soon after I had a complete blockage and could not empty my bladder. Following extensive exam and testing doctor said he did not think it was cancer. Late 2008 I had a Transurethral Resection of the Prostate. Everything worked out fine (no cancer). My body has few side effects and my last PSA reading was 2.6.

Anonymous

The PSA testing identified my prostate cancer which led to robotic surgery and removal of the cancer. I am cancer free now for three years because the PSA testing allowed me to treat it early. It saves lives. Yes, there may be some instances where testing leads to unnecessary biopsies etc., but these consequences are far in the minority and worth the risk until a better test can be found. Before my cancer diagnosis I actually had two prior biopsies before the cancer showed up. It was a bit uncomfortable but not really a big deal. Better than going to the dentist I say as a comparison.

I still can't believe that PSA testing is being questioned. Many men will suffer the consequences if this reduction in testing becomes a reality.



Del

At age 71 my PSA had spiked to 6.2. This sudden change alerted me to further investigation in my prostate health. A free PSA test revealed a score of 13.7 and then a biopsy revealed a Gleason score of 7(4-3) and then to IMRT radiation treatments. Today my PSA is 0.63. Until something better is developed, PSA screening is the best warning signal we have for Prostate Cancer and should continue to be covered by Health Insurance carriers.

Robert

My history with the PSA test began about eight years ago. My urologist noted that my PSA was rising and I was also suffering from prostate enlargement that was forcing me to get up five or six times a night. We discussed all of my options and I decided to have a TURP done. I had the procedure and when they analyzed the material taken from my prostate, they found cancer. After the procedure, my PSA dropped below zero and it has stayed there ever since.

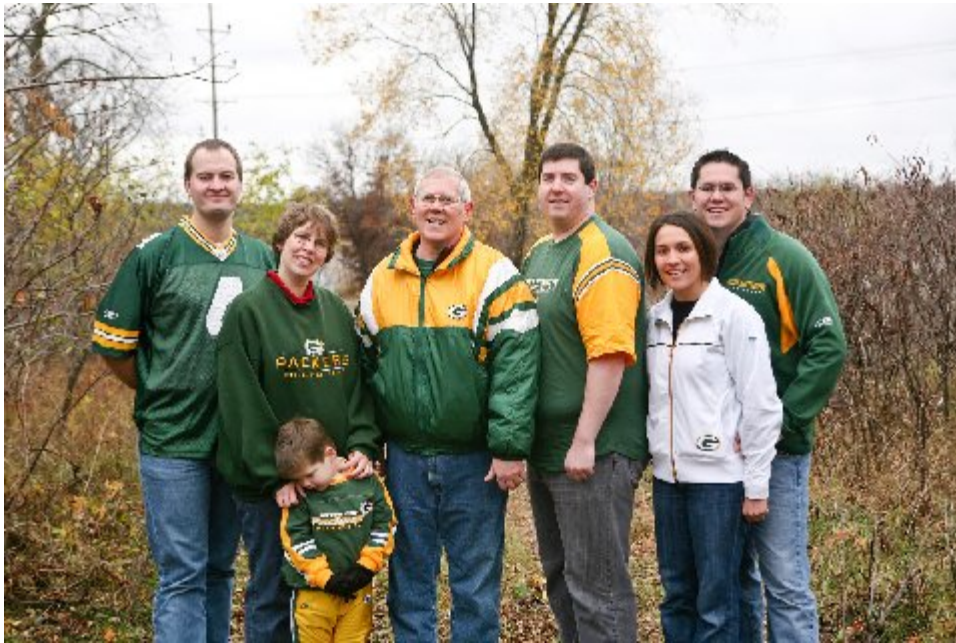
Without the PSA, I would not have discovered the cancer, nor would I have any indicators that would suggest that I had it. My current urologist thinks that it is likely that the TURP procedure removed the cancer entirely. Regardless, I now have a PSA done every six months. Without it, I would be relying totally on the digital exam, which provides very little information. I think that until a new test is developed and proven as a reliable indicator; the PSA test must continue to be supported.

Christopher

I was diagnosed with PC at the age of 58 in May 2008. The biopsy was my third after a rising PSA and the two prior biopsies coming back negative. At the time of diagnosis my PSA had risen to 7.7. The results were one core positive with 5% involvement and a Gleason 6.

Since the diagnosis I have had four more biopsies. Two with the same results and the last two were negative. My PSA went up to 11 and Avodart lowered it to 5.5. I stopped Avodart after the last negative biopsy and the PSA went up to 11.4.

In my case, I have had a rising PSA but negative biopsies. The six biopsies have not been pleasant the last one being the worst with considerable bleeding but no infection. So my rising PSA has resulted in 6 biopsies and no conclusive evidence that I need to have treatment for the PC.



Matt

I'm an 11 year prostate cancer (PCa) patient currently diagnosed as end stage, however, still generally in generally good health. In 2000 my diagnosis started with numerous tests, which included several PSA tests both pre and post biopsy. In 2001 I had radical prostatectomy along with a PSA at 6 weeks and 12 weeks post-op to determine if I had a residual PSA and if the surgery successful.

Over the years the PSA test has been an invaluable tool for my doctors in determining their use of and type of treatments for me. After completing all the standard PCa treatments, today I'm taking Zytiga and have a PSA test every 4-6 weeks which is used to measure the Zytiga effectiveness and to be sure that it continues to work.

Throughout my treatment and still at present, PSA has been and is an extremely important diagnostic tool for the doctors. They use it to help determine if a specific treatment is working or failing and the timing and use of more expensive diagnostic tests, including MRI and CT scans.

PSA is an extremely important tool to both PCa patients and doctors. To limit the use of PSA, until we have an equal or better diagnostic test, would be detrimental for all involved.

Gary

I had no symptoms in the beginning of the summer of 2011. I had no insurance, but as an informed male over 40, I paid the \$100 for the PSA test. It may have saved my life, as I had stage 3 prostate cancer. I found a prostate cancer forum to learn as much as I could

as fast as I could about PCA. I was amazed at how many members are between the ages of 40 and 59. THIS IS NOT JUST AN OLD MAN'S DISEASE AS I HAD THOUGHT BEFORE.

Tulia

In December, 2006, at age 57, during a routine annual physical, my PSA was 4.2. Since my PSA the previous year was 1.57, my doctor suggested that I see a urologist because of the rapid increase in the PSA during the previous 12 months.

The urologist advised that I should have a biopsy performed. The results came back with a cancer diagnosis in 6 of the 12 samples, with an overall Gleason score of 6.

Two months later, I had a robotic radical prostatectomy to remove the prostate, which determined that the cancer had broken through the capsule of the prostate, but had not yet entered the lymph nodes. Luckily, the surgeon obtained clear cancer-free margins. The post-surgery Gleason score was a 7.

Had it not been for the PSA test, the cancer, within a short period of time, would have fully spread to the lymph nodes and outside the pelvic area. The cancer was an aggressive form, and without early PSA detection, I would not be alive today. The side-effects of this surgery are minimal compared to not being alive today.

My wife and children are thankful for the PSA test that saved my life!

Tom

I am a survivor. The PSA test is but one small tool in the overall fight against PCa. It's grossly overused by urologists and often as justification for immediate radical treatment.

Qualified oncologists should be treating this disease with the many tools at their disposal. The PSA test is but one small part of their overall arsenal. Oncologists provide a much more balanced and enlightened approach to the treatment of PCa.

Patricio

Every six months, I and my family expect the values of my PSA Test, I am a Prostate Cancer Survivor and after all the process of surgery, recovery, radiation and collateral effects, I pray that those values remain zero. PSA Test became the most important and expected value for me and my family, a change in its values is a change in our lives.

Jim

I have prostate cancer. My cancer was found at the age of 55 through a PSA test from my primary care Physician. My cancer is an aggressive Gleason score 8. I have been blessed to be treated by the wonderful medical staff at my local hospital. Currently, I am in the last week of 24 week clinical trial.

I have had 2 injections of Lupron and in the 12 week of taking study drug abirateron. My PSA # was A HIGH OF 11...last test it was .3 cancer is negligible. Radical prostatectomy is scheduled for Oct 20...no radiation no chemo and limited side effects...I indeed feel blessed. After surgery I hope to help students in education in some capacity after having retired. I thank the Lord that he has given me more time and I am writing to share the goodness of PSA testing a simple test but a digital rectal exam did not show evidence of cancer, I felt healthy at the time but without this testing and acting on the cancer. I would have been facing an uphill battle to fight my aggressive cancer. PLEASE all men should be tested by the age of 50. PSA testing help me to discover my cancer...I will be a cancer survivor.



Mike

I am 68 and enjoy reasonably good health... the VA performs/administers my PSA test annually, and given acceptable annual results, relieves me of potential worry re Prostate and associated Cancer issues... I have a slightly enlarged Prostate, and like most men my age afflicted with this condition, endure the challenge of voiding the bladder in a timely manner... but knowing I do NOT have Cancer renders this challenge acceptable, and manageable.... I would NOT be aware of my Prostate status if not for my annual PSA test results... PEACE OF MIND is COMFORTING and INVALUABLE...

Jason

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer about 15 years ago. My PSA got up to 13 and sure enough a tumor was detected! If not for my rising PSA this tumor may not have been discovered for years?? So, I had radiation and it lay dormant for a few years, then the PSA started to rise again. My prostate was fine. But this increase in my PSA indicated something was happening. So I had a cat scan and cancer or metastases were discovered in my back in three places. Now, tell me, without the PSA how would that have been

discovered. Possibly when I became crippled? So, with 15 years' experience with prostate cancer, PSA checking should be a must. And what is the big deal? It only involves a blood test!!

Joseph

I had no symptoms but a rising PSA was detected at an annual physical. I was sent to a urologist for follow up and after a year of watching I had a biopsy (April 2008) and the results were 3 out of 12 cores were positive for cancer. I had a prostatectomy in July 2008 the pathology showed the cancer had spread to other sections of the prostate it was evaluated as T3A. If it wasn't for the early detection of the PSA test where would I be?

Anonymous

In 2005, I went to my primary doctor, a wonderful doctor in Bay Harbor, Florida for a PSA. The results were a very low PSA. About three months later, by mistake, Dr. D. ordered another one, as I went to him for general blood work because I wasn't feeling well. The results of the PSA were again low, but 30% higher than the last test. This alarmed my doctor. He strongly suggested that I go for a biopsy. I thought that this was a bit extreme because I had no symptoms what so ever! My friends who are medical doctors thought that it was probably unnecessary to go for a biopsy.

My wife, an RN, insisted I go. I had the biopsy and my prostate was cancerous! If not for the PSA, and the fact that I had the test three months later, I would be in major trouble as I wouldn't have seen my doctor for at least another year or two. I am a believer in and a cancer survivor because of the PSA.

Anonymous

My husband's PSA did not go above 3.5, and he had it tested every year. The cancer was found by the physical exam by the doctor feeling a lump and then having the biopsy. It turns out that his cancer was the aggressive cancer and we caught in just in time before it went into the margins. As I look back on my husband's lab results I could see that is PSA was rising very slowly but I assumed our family doctor would have caught that, but then again it never went above 3.5 and the standard for flags going up is 4. In his case the doctor who performed the physical examines was the one who saved his life. Every case is different.

My husband's case was not the norm. Any test or tests that will save a person's life should not be questioned or denied because of the cost of the test. How do you put a dollar figure on how much a life is worth?

Even if the cancer is the slow growing type that will probably not kill you doesn't the man have the right to choose what he wants to do with his life? I find this just another cost cutting measure and it's just disgusting. You spend millions developing these test to

prevent men from dying and then you turn around and say they are not necessary. This must stop. Do they realize how many men will now not only have their PSA test but will not have the physical examine done because of this so called finding.

Anonymous

PSA saved my husband's life. At 50 his Dr. did a rectal but did not bother to do a PSA. We went for life insurance and at 51 found his PSA to be 15 red flag called Dr. and he said we would wait for another next PSA 23 in a few weeks. Our primary and a urologist still insisted that it was an infection since my husband had NO other symptoms.

They wanted him to wait for a biopsy since they were so backed up but through my intuition as a wife we did one. Gleason 9. When we got the bad news we were told to just get out of the area to treat it not how why when where just find some-one else. We ended up with surgery followed then 5 years later radiation. My husband follows a very healthy diet works out every day and is doing as well as we can be doing. But PSA charts where we are in his every day struggle. This should be a personal choice.

Stuart

A material increase in my PSA indicated that a biopsy should be performed. We were able to diagnose the cancer at an early stage. At the age of 59 the robotic method was used to remove the prostate. I have had no problem, thanks to that procedure, with incontinence. Moreover, with continued monitoring of my PSA, 3 years later we have determined that, to date, I am in remission.

Anonymous

If it is true, we have no substitute and this is it other than digital exams, what in the hell are they thinking? Normally such moves are not merely political it is all about \$. So how many tests are done yearly and paid for by public entitlement programs how many are paid for through private insurance? What is the average cost? I am sure some bean counter somewhere is engaged in a cost benefit analysis.

So how many lives were saved or otherwise improved due to the PSA tests. I say that if one life was spared due to the early detection provided by this test, the only scientific test presently available, then leave it in place until we develop a viable alternative. But we need the true factual basis for this proposed policy change, and an alternative. Too many of men are at risk to this horrible decease.

Paul

Due to PSA testing my prostate cancer was detected early at age 50 (PSA 4.4). I went through brachytherapy and it is gone. I take a PSA test every six months to be sure it does not re-occur and it would be a burden if my insurance didn't pay for the PSA test.



Richard

I was diagnosed with stage IV prostate cancer and treated successfully. It all started with a routine PSA blood test in 2005. My levels had elevated significantly since 2001 (my last previous test.) A biopsy indicated that eleven of twelve core samples were cancerous with an overall Gleason of 7. I had a radical prostatectomy in 2006. PSA levels were undetectable post op (after a suitable waiting period.) I had routine PSA blood work every 6 months ever since then and, in 2010, the levels started rising again. Following radiation treatment (IMRT) my PSA levels are now very low and have remained so.

I have several sons who have been tested and will continue to do so. I believe that detecting via a blood test and following at regular intervals will be their first step at treatment should any be needed.

Johnny

I am a prostate cancer survivor of nine years. I am positive in my particular case that PSA screening saved my life. I had a very aggressive form of cancer, diagnosed in

stage 2. The aggressive nature of my cancer was evident by a PSA rise of 3.0 to 15.0 in a three year period. As is most cases I had no idea anything was wrong.

If it were not for the PSA test this tumor would have surely metastasized. I underwent a successful radical prostatectomy, and external beam radiation. I continue to get PSA test annually which indicate a PSA of < 0 for the past nine years. .

If we discontinue PSA testing many deadly tumors like mine will go undetected. I believe that to identify such tumors are worth the risk of so-called “needless” biopsies, anxiety and even over treatment resulting in undesirable side effects in some men. And please keep in mind that these side effects are a result of the treatment NOT the screening...

David

Two years ago at age 55 I had a routine PSA. The level was equivocal; fractionation showed it to be mostly protein-bound so I underwent a biopsy. Seven of twelve cores were positive, with positive cores in all quadrants. I had a radical prostatectomy. The pathology showed cancer up to but not quite through the prostatic capsule. I had no symptoms at the time of surgery.

Had I not been tested until I had symptoms the odds are that I would have had metastatic disease with the possibility of widespread metastases, a fair chance of death and the likelihood that treatment would have been far more of an ordeal than the surgery proved to be.

As it stands, I am continent; recovering sexual function and I have a 22% chance of recurrence over the fifteen years after surgery, with only 1% odds of death from it. This means that I stand a reasonable chance of someday seeing grandchildren and watching them grow up. I thank the NP who ordered it every time I see her. No one can tell me that that routine PSA was not money well spent.

Manny

In 2004, at age 74, my PSA went from 4.0 to 5.1 in the span of 4 months. I had no physical symptoms and the DRE was negative. A Trans rectal ultrasound showed that my prostate was not big enough to account for the higher PSA and also showed a suspicious shadow. A biopsy was done and found cancer on both sides, with a Gleason 9 score where the shadow was.

I was treated with external radiation (IMRT) plus hormonal therapy. Since then, my PSA has shown no tendency to rise, staying within the 0.10 – 0.20 range. Also, I have no residual effects from either treatment and I feel fine. In fact, I was in good enough condition to fight off an attack of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma in 2010.

Richard

I had PSA testing at age 62, and it was only 4.2. The PSA went up slowly, and a Prostate biopsy 2 years later was negative for cancer. However, since I did have a nodule in the right side on the digital rectal exam, and more PSA tests were going up to 4.8 ng/ml, I had a repeat biopsy 3 years later, at age 69. This was positive, with a Gleason 3+3=6, 4 cores positive, 2 less than 5% and 2 at 20%. Then, the PSA went up to 5.2, and the nodule was slightly larger (although the prostate size was still only 60 CC). So, at age 71, I had another prostate biopsy which now was Gleason 4+3=7, with 6 positive cores, 4 over 20%.

A laparoscopic radical prostatectomy was performed. The excised prostate showed cancer had extended through the capsule, but not to the surgical margins because the surgeon excised the nerve bundle and more tissue on the side of the nodule. My PSA has remained undetectable for two years postoperative and I will NOT die of prostate cancer.

However, ANY significant delay in getting treatment would have resulted in positive surgical margins and a VERY high risk of my dying of metastatic prostate cancer. All of my male ancestors lived to age 93 or older. I would have likely died of prostate cancer before age 84 without the PSA tests, prostate biopsies, and timely treatment cancer that was growing was diagnosed.

Michael

I had not had a PSA test for ten years. On the insistence of my doctor, I had one three years ago, and it was 7.9. A biopsy found Stage III cancer. I have had a prostatectomy, hormone therapy, and radiation therapy. My PSA readings are now 0, but I will be having biyearly testing for a while to see if the cancer has been stopped. I owe my life to PSA testing and my doctor. I do not understand the reason or motives against PSA testing, unless it is a move by the insurance companies to save money. If PSA testing is dropped, many men will die that could have lived.

Paul

I was 49 just before my 50th birthday when my doctor included a PSA test with my cholesterol test. It came back elevated he sent me to an urologist who did a biopsy that came back positive for cancer. After talking with the doctor and much soul searching I decided to have the prostate removed. Surgery went well and the pathology report came back that cancer was contained in the prostate. A year later I have no ED or incontinence problems. The routine PSA test saved my life and the surgery did not ruin my life either.

Sheldon

The PSA saved my life. I had an annual PSA test since fifty. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2003, at age 56, from a biopsy of my prostate gland that was

precipitated by a year over year rapid rise in my PSA level. I had a 4 + 3 Gleason score that indicated that I had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. Fortunately because of the early detection and a great surgeon the prostatectomy removed the entire cancerous growth.

Now eight years later I have had no recurrence of the cancer and have had none of the side effects associated with a prostatectomy. I have regained all functioning and am leading a full and active life.

Ron

I had a yearly PSA test done from 2001 (when I turned 60). It rose slowly each year until by May 2007 when it was 4.1. By November 2007 it was 6.8 at which point a biopsy was done. The results came back negative. It held at 6.8 until September 2008 at which point it began to rise rapidly and by January 2009 it was 12. Another biopsy found cancer cells Gleason score 3+3 and the advice was "wait and watch." I had had so much pain and discomfort I sought a second opinion and had the prostate removed in May 2009 by the robot technique. On admission to the hospital the PSA had risen to 30.

Post op pathology disclosed that the cancer had burst the capsule and was a highly aggressive cancer with a Gleason score of 4+5. A bone scan revealed that the cancer had metastasized to the left iliac crest. Response to androgen deprivation therapy was swift and successful.

One injection every 3 months for a year and the PSA was below 0. It remained there for 7 months with no treatment and then PSA began to climb again. In March 2011 I had 13 radiation treatments on the one lesion on the iliac crest. The hope was that radiation would kill the cells there and that perhaps the progress of the disease would be halted for some time.

That is not to be the case. Although the PSA dropped after radiation, during July/August 2011 it began to climb even more rapidly than before. A bone scan done 3 weeks ago shows that there are now lesions in my hip joints, ilio-sacral joint, at lumbar 3,4, 5, at thoracic T6 and on several ribs. Androgen deprivation therapy has begun again and I am now waiting to see if it will be as effective this time around as last.

In my case it hasn't been a question of having a PSA test done or not. What is clear is that the interpretation of the test is crucial. For far too long the hospital monitoring me dismissed my fears about the high PSA count when it was 6.8 saying it was prostatitis.

What is equally obvious is that they missed the cancer at first biopsy. The cancer source was on top of the gland, under the bladder – a place where they normally don't take any samples – or at least the hospital monitoring me didn't take them from there.

From what I read there is also a lot of scare mongering going on with talk of incontinence and impotence post operation. That need not be the case at all. And even if it is, I'd rather be alive and impotent than dead. But impotence and incontinence wasn't the case for me post op. The surgeon spared the nerve bundles on one side which allowed me to have a full erection post op but of course androgen deprivation therapy knocks the

libido out. Because the surgeon made sure that there was a long enough connection between bladder and penis after the prostate was removed, I had no continence problems from day 1 after the catheter was removed and that has been the case ever since.

My advice to all men over 40 is to have a yearly test. If the PSA goes over 4 then some form of extra screening should be done. If the PSA suddenly increases and doubles within a short time then there is real cause for concern. The amount of free PSA should be compared with the PSA itself (which was not done in my case despite my asking that it be done. The answer I got was “we don’t do that here.” I should have gone elsewhere right then.) Comparison of those two pieces of data can give a better indication as to whether there is cancer present or not.

So enough of the emotional and hysterical hype over PSA testing. Get it done. Insist that it be available and that health insurance companies pay for it. Accept nothing less.

Alvin

I was diagnosed (with PSA testing) and treated at military medical facilities, and have remained in remission for over 10 years. NOT testing men for PSA at a fairly early age should be classed as criminal negligence, and insurance companies not supporting payment for the procedure should be fined in the millions (negligent homicide) for EACH life lost. Testing (automatically whenever blood is drawn from a man) beginning at age 40 seems most reasonable. As a “double survivor” (lung cancer in remission for 3 years) I would be irresponsible if I didn’t pass my strong belief in testing along to other potential victims.

Jim

I asked my physician to give me a PSA test when I was 48 years old. I had no family history of prostate cancer, but I had read that some researchers thought that establishing a baseline number and plotting PSA velocity was a way to determine the possibility of cancer. My first PSA was 3.7, considered within normal ranges. 15 months later during my annual physical, I learned that my PSA had spiked to 7.3. After ruling out benign causes (prostatitis and enlarged prostate) my urologist conducted a biopsy where it was determined that I had prostate cancer with an aggressively rated tumor.

Three years after surgery, there is no evidence of recurrence. My surgeon remarked that it was fortuitous that I had pushed for the early PSA test and that I probably already had cancer then. I am convinced that the PSA test saved my life. I can understand that PSA testing might be worrisome for older men who might ultimately die from another cause. It makes no sense to me for insurance companies to stop covering PSA tests. In the absence of a better test, resorting back to digital rectal exams or advanced systems lessens the likelihood of a good outcome for men with prostate cancer. In my opinion such a move would be reprehensible.



Anonymous

PSA 7 years ago was 3.5 up from 1.5 previous year. Biopsy showed cancer with a Gleason of 4 3 (7) had surgery and pathology results were also (7) but 3 4 Ignoring any treatment or failure to discover would have likely resulted in my death a couple of years ago. I am currently 0.2 after 5 years of being 0.0 so I likely will be dealing with this again but I have no regrets and believe I have considerably prolonged my life.

Anonymous

Without PSA testing over time, I would never have caught my worsening prostate cancer situation. I realize that it also can lead to false findings, but on balance, if it keeps people like me alive, does it make sense to do away with it?

Even more relevant, PSA testing for those of us who do have prostate cancer, especially in advanced (systemic) stages, it is the ONLY way we can monitor what is happening and, with appropriate intervention, keep the cancer from reaching tumor stage.

Anonymous

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer via a PSA test as part of a routine medical. The PSA was only slightly elevated, (3.7) but my thorough doctor scheduled an investigation which eventually found a tiny amount of cancer in my prostate. It was early enough that I could have surgery, which was successful. That \$30 test saved my life.

Austin

Without PSA testing my prostate cancer may have gone undetected. But with frequent testing to monitor my condition, biopsies were ordered which led to the detection of prostate cancer. This was done when I was 62 yrs. old. Now almost 7 years later (approaching 69 years old) I am cancer free thanks to early detection.

Robert

I have prostate cancer for eighteen years and I take a prostate test every year to see that my cancer stay at 0.4, If my prostate cancer go over 4.0 I am in trouble that the cancer will go to my bones, If that happen I will be in all kind of pain or death. PSA test is very important to all Prostate Cancer Patients. I am a survivor for Eighteen years because of PSA.

Arek

I believe PSA testing saved my life. I was 41 when I asked for a PSA Test based on a "hunch" (had no symptoms at all). It came positive, the cancer was very aggressive. I had a radical prostatectomy & am doing fine now, nearly 5 years post op. I was told if I didn't discover my cancer when I did I would probably not make it past my 45th birthday. Here in Australia the death rate from prostate cancer has dropped when the PSA Testing expanded.

Jim

It certainly saved my life. Three years ago a digital rectum exam and no PSA and the doctor said all was well. Flash forward less than one year at another doctor who did a PSA test and found that I had an elevated PSA (around 10.00). Further testing revealed that I had prostate cancer and I also had extra capsular invasion meaning it had spread.

Without the PSA testing and then subsequent treatment I would be in very severe difficulties today. The discovery was just about two years ago.

I was a healthy male, non-smoker, non-drinker and was exercising and swimming at least four days a week.

I refuse to believe that PSA testing is of little or no value. Perhaps I am an anomaly but I don't think so.

I credit the screening with saving my life.

Jim

I am 62 and in overall great health [except for recently diagnosed PC]. I work out at a gym 5 times a week, feel great, and have no family history of Prostate Cancer. My doctor

recommended a yearly PSA test and my score has been slowly rising at about 0.25 per year for the past ten years. I hit the magical 4.0 a year ago and was told to see a urologist.

After further blood work I had a biopsy, revealing early stage cancer. I am very grateful for catching this early so as to have options and am now being monitored on active surveillance. I would not have been able to detect this cancer at an early stage so as to have options if I had waited until symptoms appeared. To recommend that men not get PSA tests seems to me to be irresponsible. Yes there are other things that can trigger a high PSA, but that is where a good doctor helps determine what is elevating the PSA.

Harold

PSA testing was very important to me. It saved my life. After a PSA reading that indicated I may have prostate cancer I had a biopsy that indicated aggressive cancer. I had a radical prostatectomy and radiation and still my PSA was rising. I am now on ADT (hormone therapy). My PSA is now undetectable. The PSA is now the only test that will indicate my prostate cancer remains dormant.



Anonymous

In 2002 my GP doctor noticed that my PSA was elevated significantly from the previous several annual exams. Six months later my PSA was elevated even more, so my doctor sent me to a urologist. After another 3 months, my PSA was elevated more yet. A biopsy confirmed that I had cancer in my prostate. I had never had any symptoms or problems (enlargement, trouble urinating, pain, etc.) In fact, during my regular physical with a DRA, my doctor stated that my prostate was “nice and small.”

Neither of us suspected cancer! Only the rate of rise of my PSA values alerted my doctors that there might be cancer. Without the annual PSA tests from the mid-1990s through 2002, my cancer would have gone unnoticed until who knows when, but most

probably too late for successful treatment. A recurrence also was correctly diagnosed by a rapidly-rising PSA in 2009.

Bob

PSA follow-up after radiation is absolutely necessary to determine progress. Ask your radiologist!

Daniel

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at 54 solely because of the ready availability of the test. I chose to have surgery and subsequently discovered that the cells that were removed were of a type likely to be mobile and cause advanced metastatic disease. Now 2 years post-surgery and cancer free.

I agree the PSA is far from a perfect test, but had it not been readily available to me it is likely my quality of life and possibly my lifespan would be considerably impaired. Elimination of PSA screening is the wrong answer, particularly for younger men who apparently have a somewhat higher risk of having aggressive tumors. We need to certainly find better tests but don't make the only screening tool we have unavailable because of actuarial math. Sure there are risks, but some level of informed decision is better than surprise you have metastatic disease.

Mel

I was tested in the 1980's and early 1990's. In 1994 my PSA went up to over 5. I was advised to see a urologist. I had a biopsy which showed PCa. I had a radical retro pubic prostatectomy. Sure I have had some problems with after affects. But I and my doctors believe I am cancer free. I have married off a daughter, have seen 2 grandchildren been born, survived being at the WTC on 9/11, retired from my formal occupation, have been volunteering for many organizations, am beginning a new career, made many new friends, and enjoying life.

Margo

My husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer three years ago. He had no symptoms. He went in for a physical and they did a PSA test on him. That was the only symptom he had- high PSA numbers. He had a biopsy and it indicated a tumor. It was only after surgery, that we learned there was another spot by his bladder that didn't show up in the biopsy.

We feel very fortunate that this was discovered in time. Without a PSA test, his cancer would not have been detected until it was too late. He is doing well now and goes in every 6 months for another PSA test.

Dennis

I was given my first PSA test 6 years ago at the age of 55. The test showed that my PSA was 8.4. Shortly after this PSA test a biopsy of done which showed that I clearly had prostate cancer and the doctors I visited recommended because of my age that I should consider treatment for this cancer. I did quite a bit of research and visited many doctors to learn all that I could about treatment options and then determined that I would have the Robotic Radical Prostatectomy surgery. This was done in May of that year 2005. Six weeks later I was back to work.

It turned out that my Gleason score was 7 where the biopsy had shown it to be 6. For six years now, I have lived a very normal life with very minimal side effects that come with this type of treatment.

Now after six years, my PSA has started to rise again, so I have started treatment to completely kill the Prostate cancer that has reappeared. I am positive that this treatment will work and that any side effects will be minimal. I am so positive that I have agreed to participate in a Clinical Trial so that in the future other men can benefit from what is learned from this study.

My only regret is, if I had known sooner that the PSA test was available, I would have requested to the doctor that the test be done at a younger age. Detecting the cancer sooner would have probably made it possible to eliminate the cancer before it had time to spread.

Dennis

My father and his father had prostate cancer and both died of the disease. By the time the disease was identified (no PSA tests at that time) it was mostly unmanageable and had metastasized.

Fortunately for me the PSA test was available and over time I watch my PSA increase to the point that treatment was indicated. PSA is critically important if used correctly. I mean a single test doesn't say much. It takes several tests to determine velocity of the cancer and only PSA has the ability to make those facts available.

Chet

PSA testing first alerted my doctor and me to the possibility I might have prostate cancer. After subsequent tests proved I did have the cancer, I underwent proton beam radiation therapy and now use PSA testing to monitor the destruction of the cancer cells and the possibility that they might recur at some time in the future.

Would I be better off if I had never had any PSA testing? I don't know. I had no symptoms which would have directed me to see a urologist. After proton beam therapy, I have no side effects to speak of, and my PSA level is substantially reduced. The treatment

was painless and not too inconvenient, but maybe I would have lived just as normal a life if I had never been diagnosed with this slow-developing disease in the first place.

Anonymous

Without PSA testing, I wouldn't have known I had prostate cancer probably for years. Armed with the knowledge that my PSA was high, I had a biopsy and radical prostatectomy. PSA testing later revealed that the cancer was still there and five years later, it indicated metastasis. I now need PSA testing to indicate how well androgen deprivation therapy is working. PSA testing has served me well.

Diane

My husband is alive because of a PSA test at 49, and that's only after other doctors failed to do one earlier when they should have. Finally found a good doctor. Stage IV but now five years undetectable after surgery and chemo. What, should he have waited until it had spread to his bones to spare him the side effects of surgery? He's alive today because of surgery and treatment. He participated in a trial where they give chemo right after surgery.

James

At age 40 (in 1988) I had my first prostate biopsy. There was no cancer. The first PSA I have recorded, though, was in 1994. By 2001 my PSA had risen to 4.2. By 2008 it was 7.8. Since I had been taking Avodart for many years I understand that this score must be doubled. Along the way I had at least 6 biopsies. None revealed cancer, although some of them showed high PIN, until the biopsy in early 2009. I had lots of prostate cancer in Prostate section 1 and some in Prostate section 2. My Gleason score was 3+3.

The urologist ordered bone scans and MRI's, and neither revealed any cancer outside the prostate. I had a second opinion, and still there was no cancer outside the prostate. I had my surgery (laparoscopic) in April, 2009. The surgeon felt as my urologist did that the operation was a success and the cancer was contained. However, when the biopsy came back, the cancer was in the margins but not in the seminal vesicles and the lymph nodes, etc. By December of 2009 my PSA had quadrupled, and radiation was recommended. I finished my radiation in June, 2010. In the past two or three months my PSA has risen, and the doctors are just watching every three or four months with PSA's to see what is going to happen.

As one can see from my testimonial the PSA has been important all the way through and will continue to be in monitoring my progress or lack of it. Yes, I wish there was a better test that could identify those of us who have aggressive cancer and those of us who don't, but we are not there yet. I also wish that better techniques could be

developed to take care of the impotence that I have and will continue to have according to what I have read of those who have had a prostatectomy and radiation.

I also wish that I had total continence, although I am blessed that I have only slight problems. Men need to rise up and make certain that these things come to pass. I never dreamed that my sex life would change so drastically by my treatments. However, the PSA must be available for all men beginning at least 40 until something better comes along.

Even with the PSA my prostate cancer progressed too far before I had surgery even though I know I had a great urologist who was watching out for me.

Bruce

PSA testing led to biopsy, biopsy led to surgery, and only at surgery could it be determined that my prostate cancer had already metastasized to the bladder. No symptoms except rapid rise in PSA. How advanced and wide-spread would my cancer have been to result in symptoms that indicated prostate cancer? It's true, dead men don't need PSA tests.

Nancy

The man I love has stage 4 prostate cancer; this is how they found it although it was already in the advanced stages by the time symptoms were occurring. I cannot imagine not having PSA tests available for men, any more than I can woman not having mammograms.

Jamie

In July 2010 a blood test revealed an elevated PSA count and I was referred to an Urologist. A biopsy of the prostate was taken and forwarded to John Hopkins analysis. The biopsy revealed a Gleason score of 9, requiring that further testing be done to insure that the cancer had not spread to other parts of the body.

The cancer was isolated to the prostate, and various treatment options were offered. I opted for Radiation treatments (44 sessions); and a series of 6 Hormone injections. A year has passed since my last Radiation treatment, and all subsequent PSA test scores have zero or less. My family and I feel that the PSA test was a lifesaver and I'm forever grateful of its availability.

Kenneth

My PSA test discovered cancer after about 15 years of testing. My father and brother have all had prostate cancer.



Ed

PSA saved my life; saved me from a lingering painful death due to prostate cancer. I am in a high risk group – my paternal grandfather, father, uncle and one of my brothers have all had prostate cancer. My father, brother and I were caught in time. My grandfather died before I was born, my uncle committed suicide when the pain of stage IV and the futility of the struggle became too great.

My father had a prostatectomy at age 64. As a direct result of that I began getting annual PSA tests in my mid-thirties and received a timely warning when my reading jumped at age 50. A biopsy revealed Gleason 7 cancer in the left lobe, a digital exam was inconclusive. I told the physician to take out as much real estate as he felt necessary; I enjoy an active life with many interests and

Had no interest in checking out in my early 50's. Impotence was a high price to pay, but the surgery was successful and I am still enjoying my life. According to the surgeon, the cancer was a millimeter away from exiting the prostate, had it not been implied by PSA and confirmed by biopsy, but instead discovered later by digital exam, I would be writing a much different note today....if I was alive at all.

I support PSA as a screening tool at least for those of us at high risk.

Jay

At the age of 53, I had no indication that I might be having an issue with my prostate, but while undergoing an annual physical for my pilot's license; my doctor did a PSA test. He saved my life. That PSA set in motion a prostate biopsy and subsequent prostatectomy that resulted in the removal of a very aggressive and fast moving form of prostate cancer.

Had we not found the cancer through that routine PSA test, the cancer would have metastasized and I would be facing a much shortened life span. I owe my life to my doctor's decision to do this routine test at the time they did it. Under these new guidelines

I would be a statistic, not a survivor. I can't help believe that once again money and a few greedy insurance companies are willing to allow children to be raised without fathers so they can save money instead of encouraging more of these types of tests.

Robert

In 1998 I had a PSA test done that reflected a reading of borderline high. However, the doctor advised that everything was normal. A year later my PSA was quite high and tests showed that I had stage IV prostate cancer. I'm certain that a year earlier had the doctor recommended further testing, such as a biopsy, my cancer would have been caught early enough to be treatable.

Fortunately, I have survived for 12 years so far, no thanks to the original doctor's "everything is normal". I may be an exception to the "norm" as I have been told, but you can't be too aggressive in dealing with cancer.

Anonymous

I am a nine year survivor of prostate cancer surgery by cryo-ablation. I began PSA tests in 1998 (at age 60) on an annual basis. In 2002 following a slow but steady rise in the PSA numbers (3.4 to 5.8) I underwent a DRE and subsequently a biopsy, with a positive diagnosis. I found cryo-ablation to be minimally invasive. I continue to get an annual physical examination and insist on a PSA test each time.

The readings have so far been miniscule (0.023 etc.). I continue at age 73 to enjoy relatively good health, and credit early detection via PSA testing to my still being here. I have since lost three close friends whose prostate cancers were detected too late for them to do much about it. I remain a fervent advocate of the test, but would be delighted if a better one were devised.

Anonymous

Hello. I am from India. My father has been operated for prostate cancer and the treatment is called hormonal something. He has been following PSA test since many years. Because of this test only the presence of cancer was suspected. There after other tests

confirmed it. After operation every 3 or 6 months PSA test is done. Till now the PSA test shows below border level. He is not having much inconvenience. The doctor also informed us that he has seen patients having PSA as high as 5000 SURVIVING!
So the point is High PSA need not be a factor to worry.

Anonymous

I believe that without the PSA test, I would be dead by now. After radiation treatment did not cure me; I had cryosurgery and biochemical failure. I am doing active surveillance until I need hormone deprivation. Without the PSA test you are playing Russian roulette with your life.

Tim

At age 42, on a Halloween night I received a call from my doctor that no one ever wants to receive...you have Cancer.

I was devastated and just broke down and cried. How was it possible? I had no symptoms – all digital exams were negative. No signs of any kind. I feel that the ONLY thing that saved my life was a PSA test which my doctor just happened to give me upon a fluke, as PSA tests are not normally given until age 50.

With a level of 4.9 it was highly elevated for someone of my age. Biopsies definitely showed cancer, and after radical prostatectomy surgery they found I had a very aggressive Prostate cancer, with a clinical score of T2C & Gleason score of 7.

If my doctor hadn't taken the PSA test when he did, I honestly feel I would not be around today had they not given me that PSA test and waited until the standard age of 50.

A PSA saved my life.

Anonymous

In March of 2008 at 51 years old I went in for my yearly exam. I had a DRE and a PSA test done. The DRE was negative but a day later I received a call from my Dr. and was told that my PSA was 6.5. A biopsy was done and in May I received my results. Gleason Score 3+4=7, T1c. I had surgery in Aug 2008 and now 3 years later cancer free.

My father had prostate cancer but it was a surprise and shocking for me to have it at my age. Things are going better now but the first year was a difficult time. Better to find out earlier than later.

Stephen

I thank my primary physician for always asking at my annual physical from around age 40 if I desired a PSA test included. He absolutely gave me the choice, which I accepted. Over the period 2005-2007 he observed an "acceleration" in PSA values from 2.2-5.9-7.9,

at which point I was referred to a urologist, followed by the dreaded (and dreadful) biopsy, and many other tests. I was healthy, 58 years old, and given what I found out from the radiology reports (and several opinions) “watchful waiting” was not a wise choice. I would not likely be one of those who, untreated, would “die with” rather than “die of” prostate cancer.

I thank PSA testing for giving me the four years and counting that my family and I have enjoyed.

Larry

PSA testing worked for me: When I was 60, I had my annual PSA test. Although the PSA was low, it had risen very quickly in the past year. A follow-up test showed a suspiciously high percentage of free PSA. A careful DRE detected a hard area. A biopsy found cancer in three adjacent cores with two of the cores containing over 70%.

The Gleason score was 7. Imaging showed a tumor that was “unexpectedly large” with capsular involvement. One test, not known for its specificity, suggested extra capsular extension, seminal vesicle involvement and a positive node. I was treated with radiation and a year of androgen deprivation. It has been four years since all treatment ended. My PSA is undetectable and there are no signs of recurrence.

I paid a price: Treatment caused urinary urgency and frequency which responded well to Flomax. I also had mild but frightening rectal bleeding which was stopped with radio frequency ablation. And, finally, I have ED for which I use Levitra.

I’ll never know if I was over-diagnosed or received the best treatment. Who does? But I do know that I chose my treatment thoughtfully with the help of a medical oncologist who had no vested interest in any modality. It was a reasoned decision.

My conclusions are these: PSA can be a good screening test if PSA velocity/doubling time are calculated, free PSA is measured when appropriate, and follow-up tests and treatments are chosen rationally, with a careful weighing of risks and benefits. PSA testing, like any tool, is no better than the person wielding it. Clinicians who rely on one isolated PSA value, out of historical context and without follow-up, give it a bad name. Thoughtless, cursory use of such tools is a problem

Rushed decisions to treat (or not treat) without careful staging, grading, risk-benefit analysis and a disinterested second opinion are also problematic. But these problems are endemic to American healthcare. Perhaps we should address them instead of blaming our tools.



Bill

In 2005 a biopsy determined I had prostate cancer. Within a year 20 friends, near and far were also diagnosed. Six are now dead. They all had delayed having PSA blood work. The other 14, I included, had regular PSA testing. Each of us had treatment. Most of us (those who died as well) had or have side effects with varying degrees of unpleasantness. But, with each PSA testing since treatment, we who are alive, fear the cancer within less and can devote our energy to dealing with the other part of having prostate cancer: incontinence, impotence, radiation sickness or even the more mundane unstoppable flatulence.

Take away our PSA testing and we won't know if the cancer within is tame or triumphant. Keep it from men yet untested and they won't know either. My six dead friends would likely have chosen the possibility of side effects from treatment to death if they have been able to make that decision in time.

John

PSA testing saved my life. I had skipped annual physicals for a few years, when in 2004 my wife insisted I get one. I was age 52. That routine physical included a PSA test. My PSA was 114 (not a typo). I had no symptoms of disease. Follow-ups with a urologist (ultrasound and biopsy) confirmed cancer.

I am now a 7-year survivor, having had my prostate removed on 12/1/04. PSA tests since then confirm a PSA of 0 (not measurable). I was lucky, and owe it all to a routine PSA test included in a routine physical.

Ray

I know that currently the PSA test is the only tool we men have to detect a possible problem in the Prostate. If it wasn't for the PSA test, I would not have had noticed there may be a prostate problem. The biopsy confirmed that I had prostate cancer. **THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO DETECT A PROSTATE PROBLEM!!!!**

I am a prostate cancer support group leader and see the difference of survival in men who have detected Prostate cancer early, thru PSA testing, and men who have not had a PSA until the Prostate cancer was advanced.

Carol

During the 90s my PCP routinely took my PSA during my annual physical, and my PSA usually was borderline high. But in 1997, it jumped to about 7 which triggered further tests and a biopsy. The biopsy indicated prostate cancer. I had radical prostatectomy. After recovery, my PSA was routinely checked and it remained below 0.1 for about 10 years, but then it spiked to about 20. After a retest, to see if there was a lab error, my PSA was up to about 22. After several tests, it was determined that the prostate cancer had returned. I was put on hormone therapy (HT), and a monthly Zometa infusion.

Carl

My grandfather died two years after an orchiectomy due to prostate cancer. My first PSA test escalated to biopsy and robotic radical prostatectomy. I am very lucky. My gay partner of 14 years remains at my side. I remain functional sexually and lack incontinence. I consider PSA testing as saving my life. It runs in the family. I lost half of nerve, sparing function but the cancer was caught before it threatened my life. Aggressive cancer is deadly. Only takes 2 years. Why shouldn't my son get a PSA? He did and the Doctor said come back in 5 years. Testing saves lives. It saved mine.

William

I am a testimonial to the effectiveness of PSA testing. I watched my PSA level gradually rise over a number of years. When it took a sudden large rise, my Doctor performed a biopsy which indicated a type of cancer. I had radioactive seed implants which killed the cancer and left no side effects. I consider myself very fortunate to have early recognition of cancer and the ensuing good results.

My next door neighbor did not have prostate cancer detected early enough and subsequently died of it.

Howard

My PSA was 6.6 in Sept. 2008. I asked my V.A. doctor for last year's result. He had to go back to 2 and a half years to march 2006 to find the last test which was 3.3. My post op pathology revealed Gleason nine with seminal vesicle invasion. I had to have radiation and Hormone deprivation. If they had been checking my PSA on a regular basis I could have been diagnosed in time to have a surgical cure. I am a firm believer in PSA testing and believe it should be encouraged in TV ads like breast cancer awareness is for women.

Joe

A PSA test got me started on the road to treatment. Without it I would not have known that I had the disease.

David

As with all cancers the key to treatment is early detection. Why wait until it is too late to start? Do not pass a death sentence on men who may be completely unaware of the danger they are in. What you don't know CAN hurt you.

Howard

I had yearly PSA test for decades without problem. In 2003, my GP saw that my PSA almost doubled in the last year though it was still "normal" for a man my age - 63. He sent me to a Urologist who felt something minor but decided to do a biopsy. It appeared from the biopsy that surgery was necessary. He assured me that it was being caught early enough that it should be totally effective. It turned out that the advanced, aggressive, grade 5; cancer was outside the prostate and into the seminal vesicles. I required HAT, followed in 2008 by radiation and HAT.

If I did not have annual PSA's, this wouldn't have been discovered in time to save my like!

Louis

The PSA test is a very crude screening test. Swollen prostate or prostatitis also can cause elevation of the numbers. Just as initial aids screening has the Western Blot test for confirmation, there is the free PSA (more costly than standard PSA) that is used by urologist to help determine if the somewhat invasive and costly prostate biopsy is warranted. In my case, my PSA had been approximately 10 for several years before I became eligible for Medicare.

The free PSA test results for me were on the borderline for predicting cancer risk. The DRE exam had been palpable lump free. As soon as I became eligible for Medicare, the needed prostate biopsy was done for which early cancer was found. Surgery was chosen

because of its proven track record and long-term, the side effects would be less than with radiation therapies should the initial side effects resolve themselves. What should really be done is that before biopsy is performed, the free PSA test be done first to help determine if there is any near-term need for the biopsy.

Hopefully better secondary tests will become available that would help distinguish between non-aggressive cancers and those that need to be addressed soon.

Arthur

As a man whose father and grandfather both had prostate issues, I really appreciate being able to get my PSA level tested.

Although my PSA level was only slightly higher than normal, the test, along with a biopsy on my prostate was how I found out that I had cancer. Luckily it was found early and I was able to get it early.

As a father of two young men I hope to be able to encourage them to get their PSA levels tested at a young age. Insurance coverage for PSA testing is very important to me.

Gary

PSA testing found prostate cancer for me. My grandfather died of the disease and it was a very difficult and painful way to die. I was 65 when it was discovered and I had my prostate removed. The side effects of surgery were nothing compared to what my grandfather went thru and I would do the same if I had to do it over again. Recent PSA tests are very minute so the cancer is gone from my body for which I am grateful.

Bryant

It was a PSA test that led to the detection of my cancer, and now after treatment (external beam radiation) I have PSA tests every 6 months to monitor my progress. Not paying for PSA testing is going to have a serious financial effect on me as the test is the best option to detect any re-occurrence so that I can begin additional treatment.

Anonymous

The PSA test saved my Husband's life. The doctor sent him to local lab to draw blood as a standard procedure. When the test results came back his PSA was 10.1 which is way out of the range of Normal. We had it run again and only to see it went up even higher. Shortly after that he was seen by a Urologist and was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. He didn't have any of the typical systems, so needless to say we were shocked. At the time he was only 49 yrs. old. After two surgeries and a series of radiation procedure, thank you Lord and we are blessed 1.5 yrs. later. As of matter, we had another PSA just done and the results came back his PSA was .01 which is perfect. Again without the PSA testing and

coverage by our insurance carrier it might have been too late to do anything and we would not still have my Husband with us today.



Anonymous

After my brother, age 76, was diagnosed with prostate cancer that was very fast developing. After his death at 78 I began to have a PSA test about every 3 mos. My PSA was around 2.6 for many years, but rose to 4.2 in 3 mos. when I was 77. My GP sent me to a Urologist who did a biopsy which showed cancer on the left side of my prostate with a Gleason rating of 7.

I immediately went into radiation treatment on an IMRT machine and have since been cancer free based on a PSA near zero for 3 yrs. I believe monitoring my PSA may have saved me from going through the horror that my brother suffered. I'd hate to see the PSA test eliminated in cases like mine where there is a sibling or familial connection. In those cases PSA testing frequency should be stepped up to detect a sudden change.

Dan

Eight years ago I was the fifth man in my family to be diagnosed with Prostate Cancer. Now, three more have been diagnosed and successfully treated. Before my experience two had died from Prostate Cancer. I am glad to say I played a small role in the last three getting tested, finding their elevated PSA and following that up with a biopsy which found all three needed treatment. They were treated and we all are doing great. Side-effects? Yes, but alive and enjoying children's weddings, grandchildren and great-

Founded in 1998, Malecare Cancer Support is America's leading prostate cancer survivor support and advocacy nonprofit organization. Learn more at www.malecare.org

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grandchildren being born, productive, rich and fulfilling lives. Something that might not have happened if we had not talked to our doctors and had our PSA tested.

Terry

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer when my PSA was 4.2 in 2002. After surgery the cancer was found to have spread to the lymph nodes and seminal vesicles. The surgery did not work, and today 9 years later I'm still fighting. If I had not had the PSA test it is highly likely that by now I would be dead.

Timothy

Between 2004 and 2005, I saw 10 patients in a primary care setting with PSA less than 4 but on exam, they had positive findings on their Digital Rectal Exam (DRE). They ended up getting biopsied and being diagnosed with prostate cancer. I know that the PSA is not a definitive test. From this experience, I set my own threshold PSA to 2.5 and if greater, I will need a biopsy. In 2005, my PSA was 3 and so I requested to be biopsied since I was 45 years old and African American.

Unfortunately, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer from that biopsy. Three urologists suggested that I watch and wait and not do treatment but follow with biopsy and PSA in 6 months. However, being 45 years old at that time with two young sons including a 1 year old son, I did not want to take a chance to watch and wait since I knew at least 2 patients who died in their fifties from prostate cancer. Fortunately for me, I had a Robotic Laparoscopic Prostatectomy and after 6 years, I am fortunate to not have any problem with incontinence or erectile dysfunction.

I continue to see my urologist once yearly for a PSA and DRE. I am happy that I did get the PSA test and I recommend the PSA as a screen for men greater than 45 years old.

Anonymous

It was only my accelerating PSA in 1997 that lead to the diagnosis of my prostate cancer early enough to be actually cured. At 13 years after treatment my PSA is still undetectable and because I chose a center of excellence, I have no side or after effects. Had I not been treated the probability that my Gleason 7 cancer would have escaped the prostate gland was very high.

The PSA test is a valuable diagnostic tool. The only problems are caused by incompetent doctors who do not know how to use the information provided by the test.

Anonymous

PSA test diagnosed my stage 4 prostate cancer at age 42. Without the test I would be much worse off and maybe even dead.

Anonymous

The PSA saved my life. I am a 46 year old African American Man and my first PSA Test in 2002. My PSA was 10. After a biopsy found that my Prostate was 85% cancerous. (9 of 12 samples was cancerous)

I didn't have any symptoms to indicate that I had Prostate Cancer. If I hadn't got the PSA my cancer would have spread beyond the prostate.

How else would I have found out that I had Prostate Cancer?

Joe

At age 50 when my internist first suggested a PSA test, I was unaware of the test. For 7 years it slowly increased but was below 4ng/ml. Because my DRE's were negative, my internist thought it was due to an enlarged prostate. When I contracted prostatitis at age 58 and it did not resolve totally with antibiotics, he sent me to a urologist. Best thing that happened as I had an aggressive cancer, but was well contained in the capsule. The PSA history was a major reason why the internist sent me to the specialist.

My point in telling this short story is that the patient is not aware of what tests are available to him when he is healthy and not focused on an illness. If my internist had not suggested the PSA test, he may not have been inclined to send me to the urologist as soon as he did. Until a better test is developed, we need this test. Once diagnosed based on a biopsy, there is enough information available to make good decisions with the doctor on a course of treatment or watchful waiting.

Ken

My GP had been ordering PSA tests for quite a few years when at 54 my PSA went from 3.2 to 3.8 in one year. Not a big jump, but he had me see a urologist for a biopsy. Just a small percentage of cancer was found in both lobes, Gleason 6. So I opted for a retro-pubic radical prostatectomy. Post-op biopsy, still Gleason 6 but I had a positive margin. It was suggested by my urologist and oncologist that I have radiation.

The radiologist ordered a CAT scan and discovered a tumor in my kidney. So under the knife again. When I was healed from that I started radiation treatment and as that was ongoing my PSA rose slightly. Six months later my PSA stabilized at 0.02 and it's still that at four plus years.

When someone can tell me that my Gleason 6 would not have turned into a Gleason 7 and then an 8, 9 or 10 and also that my positive margin would not have spread though out my body and metastasized then, and only then, would I say that the PSA test is not worth doing.

Greg

My PSA was stable at 2.5 for years and then began climbing to 3.5 and then 5.7 15 months later (age 69). At the request of my family doctor I went for a biopsy which showed T1c Gleason 6. After extensive research and mortality tables that showed I had 21 years life expectancy, I had open radical prostatectomy, on May 19, 2011. The post operation pathology (Gleason 7 T2c) showed the cancer was more widespread and advanced than the biopsy indicated.

I had no adverse effects from the biopsy and minor incontinence for the first three weeks after the surgery, with none since then. I had an excellent erectile function prior to surgery and it is coming back now with penile rehabilitation.

Robert

Although my PSA never went above 5, I still needed up with Prostate Cancer. It was 5+ years of 2.5 to 3 PSA levels, a positive family history (My father had it and died 10 years after his initial surgery with complications of the cancer.), 2 negative biopsies although 1 of them had "high PIN" and then my insistence of the even higher cost urine test (is it PCA something?) that finally convinced my urologist to do 'one more' biopsy.

And that one found it!

All of that said the steady rise of my PSA and that it would not lower along with all the other I mentioned, is what saved my life.

The PSA and DRE is what we have for now. Although not perfect, both have saved many lives. I have met prostate cancer survivors from 38 years of age to 80. All, started with a higher than expected PSA.

This new information without further explanation will do undoubtedly confuse many men about their need to get screened for prostate cancer.

Any man who has had or has dealt with a the prospect of prostate cancer will tell you that they will get their PSA and insist that their other male family members do so.

Anonymous

I understand that testing can be directional if there is a big jump.

I also know from experience that men are over treated for PC.

I'm on active surveillance – and use the PSA test as a guide. With a digital exam.

I have had two biopsies.

The first showed indolent cancer cells at a percentage that made surveillance an option (along with the other requirements).

The second biopsy showed only PIN cells of the least aggressive kind. No cancer cells. And my PSA had dropped.

That was 3 years ago. In the meantime, my PSA has bounced around but has stayed in this range.

So I know that unless there's a big jump in the PSA, I can't use it to determine what's really going on anymore...or so my Dr. tells me, since he wants me to take another biopsy. That's the practice – biopsy after X years to be sure things haven't gotten worse. Except go to 3 biopsies and there is real consequences for sexual functioning. I'm not sure what to do anymore. But I do have PSA tests 2x a year to see what might be happening.

If there had been a big jump I would understand taking the next step. Without a jump though, I don't know what to do.

I do know that having the first biopsy was traumatic, being told I had cancer was traumatic, and then finding out it was "indolent" and I didn't have to do anything...well, all I can say is, there has to be a better way and better ways to diagnose, image, etc.



Manuel

I am alive today because of the PSA test. I thought I was perfectly healthy. A PSA and subsequent biopsy revealed three aggressive tumors inside my prostate gland, excised nearly 17 years ago, one of the tumors was about ready to escape the gland. Doing nothing would have guaranteed my demise and a very slow, painful, costly and miserable death.

Yes! I had side effects, but being alive and adjusting to my "new normal" through a penile implant, was WELL WORTH IT.

Tom

For me the PSA test served as a "red flag" that a problem could possibly exist. In my case we monitored the PSA levels for over a year. During that year, the PSA level continued to increase. After a year of increased PSA levels my doctor did a biopsy, the result of which showed that many of the samples were "positive" for cancer. It was then that we initiated radiation treatment.

The PSA testing has limitations, IT IS AN INDICATOR, and should be monitored over a period of time (like in my case) before additional action is taken.

Dave

I had a PSA test 7 years ago, and my Doctor noticed that thru several years of tests that my PSA had made a significant change, so he sent me for further tests. The further tests showed that my Prostate had a bulge, they took a sample and it showed cancer cells. I had a prostatectomy and for 5 years my PSA was .0000, then after 5 years I started showing signs of PSA .006 then .009, .08 .07 over the last 3 years. My doctor says I have cancer cells somewhere, but we have no idea where. He is suggesting Hormone treatment, but I am resisting this treatment until my PSA goes over 1.000

Phil

Because my doctor gave me the PSA test at my annual physicals he saw an increase in my PSA within one year. I went to my urologist and he took 12 biopsies. One showed signs of cancer. Three months later I had the Da Vinci robotic surgery. A small amount of cancer was found. That was 4 years ago. Today I am cancer free and healthy. If my doctor had not performed the PSA's I could be walking around with cancer. If the cancer had not been detected early, I could have been in real trouble if the cancer grew and spread. Slow growing or fast growing it is still cancer.

Jan

I was diagnosed at age 41 in 1993, before most urologists knew much about prostate cancer. Lupron and ADT at that time had only been shown to give 12-18 months extra survival. My presenting PSA was 13.6. Surgery seemed the best option, and it was based on that PSA. Now I know this was a mistake, as was the external beam radiation that followed. I should have sat tight and watched my PSA, waiting to see if a biopsy was really necessary.

Both treatments resulted in incontinence and partial impotence, with the radiation causing rectal bleeding and increasing incontinence as the years progressed. I have never been in remission these past 18+ years, but have used the PSA to monitor the effectiveness of the various forms of ADT I have been using.

One could argue I would have had the same final result had I not had that PSA at age 41, but at 13.6 and a Gleason of 7 this seems unlikely. The PSA is useful as a monitoring tool. Too bad so many urologists and radiologists abuse it so aggressively, using it as an excuse for expensive treatments that produce significant morbidity. It's not the PSA test that's a problem; it's what ignorant or unethical doctors DO with it that's a problem A BIG problem.

Garth

I doubt I would be here much longer had I not had a PSA, which was indicative of possible cancer. The biopsy sure showed Cancer. And after surgery, it was determined

that (through a PSA test), it had spread beyond the margins of my Prostate. It would be simply TRAGIC to many men who would suffer HORRIBLE pain and subsequent DEATH, without the PSA test, early detection is the key.

Rex

I could probably write a book but none would probably buy it. Was diagnosed in 1991 by GP who said I had a small pimple on my prostate. My PSA test came in at 11.6. Had surgery on July 11, 1991. All nerves were cut. Incontinent for about one year. PSA started to advance after 1996. My PSA on June 2011 measured at 2.8. Now advancing about 0.4 per annum and am 88 yrs. young going on 89 and hoping to be shot by jealous husband.

Tom

Have you ever watched a man die from a delayed diagnosis of prostate cancer? It is a painful way to die. I watched my father die from prostate cancer that was not diagnosed until after it had metastasized. Had he been diagnosed when the disease was still in a treatable state, he might still be with us.

There are NO clearly discernible symptoms to prostate cancer before it metastasizes. In the absence of regular PSA/DRE screening and subsequent biopsies, there is no other means of early detection for this disease. So until your task force can recommend another means of early detection while this disease is still in a treatable form, the recommendation from your committee is unduly harsh and ill-conceived and, if followed by men in this country, will result in many MORE needless early deaths! Living longer with manageable side effects is preferable to dying an early, painful death.

Charles

After doubling of my PSA from 2 to 4 in one year and positive 12 site biopsy of my prostate, I received a radical prostatectomy at age 68 for a Gleason score 6 cancer. Since then my annual PSA has been non-detectable, and 8 years will be coming up this November. I have had only partial erections since surgery, but this is manageable with a pump device and there are many other ways to intimacy with my wife. There is no way to know what my health would be now if I had never had a PSA test, but what is certain is that the cancer was removed. I thank my expert surgeon for saving my life.

Anonymous

PSA testing saved my life! I was 49 years old when a routine physical checkup included PSA testing due to my age. Result came back at a PSA of 5. Doctor indicated that we should re-check next year and see trend. I said NO! Let's do more tests now to see why

PSA of 5. Two weeks later, results came back of cancer cells detected at 4 of 12 core samples taken.

PSA testing saved my life. Now, 12 years later, I have a undetectable PSA level.

Bruce

Without PSA testing, I would be DEAD now. I had no symptoms, no urination problems, but my Dr., after 3 straight slight increases in my PSA, found a tiny hard spot on my prostate. Biopsy showed Gleason 3+4. Started on hormone blockers, then seed implants after EBR. PSA down to) for 5 years, then gradually increased to 11.5 in 2003. Hormone blockers would not work anymore = hormone refractory prostate cancer. Started on Ketaconazole, Avodart, Zometa and Lupron. PSA went down to 0.3 and has stayed below that level

Without PSA, we are consigning many men to high Gleason and little hope for prolonged life in a trade for a little (very little) pain from a biopsy. After all tests, watchful waiting is still possible so why take the chance that your cancer will be found to late.

Bob

I am a 73-year-old man who was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer in the spring of 2010. The diagnosis resulted from a rising PSA, for which my urologist recommended a biopsy when it moved from 3.73 to 4.75 in six months. Nothing was detectable by DRE. The biopsy revealed prostate cancer with a Gleason score 7 (3+4). I did a lot of reading and thoroughly investigated the options, including active surveillance (which my urologist thought would be a reasonable choice).

I discussed it all with specialists in internal medicine, urology, medical oncology, and radiation oncology, as well as with numerous other prostate cancer survivors who had undergone various forms of treatment. On the basis of all this information and medical advice, I elected to undergo a course of external beam radiation therapy using the Calypso system. Fifteen months after completion of the treatment, my PSA, which has been tested every three months, appears to have stabilized below 0.4.

I have been actively monitoring my PSA for many years because my father died of prostate cancer in 1974 at the age of 63. This was before PSA testing was available. His disease was discovered by DRE after he began to experience urinary symptoms. By then it was too late; it had already metastasized to the bone. An immediate orchiectomy was performed, and he was treated with some (then very experimental) chemotherapy, which made him very nauseous and unable to hold food down. About a year and a half later, as his bone pain and other forms of suffering became unbearable, he finally decided to end his own life.

My father was a cardiovascular surgeon and a professor at our state's only medical school, so he was medically knowledgeable and had access to the very best health care. He was physically fit and careful about his health. I believe that if PSA testing had been

available to him, he would have had it as a regular screening method, detected his cancer much earlier, and might easily have lived another 25 or 30 years.

Two years ago, my brother-in-law (and close friend of almost 60 years) died of prostate cancer after a long battle against the disease. His treatment included a radical prostatectomy, subsequent androgen deprivation therapy, several clinical trials, and in the end, intensive but largely unsuccessful palliative care.

He experienced severe pain beginning about two years before he died. He was completely bedridden for the last six months of his life, about four months of which he spent in the hospital with largely uncontrollable pain. Not only was this a particularly miserable dying process, but I'm certain that the cost of his medical care after detection of the disease must have been well in excess of a million dollars. In his case, all of this was the result of his own lack of information (or carelessness, depending on one's perspective).

He was not regularly monitoring his PSA, and the disease was discovered only as the result of a life insurance physical which required the test. I confidently believe that if he had been monitoring his PSA regularly, his disease could have been discovered in time for successful treatment and he would be enjoying a healthy life today, just as I am. I'm well aware that if I had chosen not to have my cancer treated, I might have lived just as long as I will now, and without some of the unpleasant side effects that I am now experiencing. But it was my choice to make, based on as much information as I could gather.

I am satisfied with the choice that I made. I have a peace of mind that I would never have had, given my family history, without the benefit of PSA screening. I would not have been at all happy to have been denied a screening tool that would detect this common form of cancer and enable me to make an informed decision regarding treatment.

I am frankly outraged by the panel's recommendation that routine PSA screening be discontinued. Admittedly, it's an unassailable fact that PSA screening leads to some invasive and expensive treatments, often with difficult and undesirable side effects, of men whose cancer would not have been fatal if left untreated. But I also know that many thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of men are alive today who would otherwise have suffered ugly, painful deaths had they not had this invaluable screening tool available to them.

It's crystal clear to me that the answer is not to discontinue screening, but rather to screen as many men as possible, and make sure that those with elevated PSA are fully informed of the options, including, in cases of early stage and/or low-grade cancer, active surveillance or even simple non-treatment, and the potential consequences of each option.

There are also valuable prognostic tools available, such as the Memorial Sloan Kettering nomogram, to aid men in assessing the probable consequences of each option based on their individual diagnostic profiles.

With full, objective information, it should be the patient's decision how to proceed. Many of us who have been successfully treated as a result of early detection and are

leading healthy, active lives – and especially those of us who have watched loved ones suffer the agonies of death from this horrible disease.

David

At a health fair in 1994 I paid \$25 to get a PSA test, thinking it was unnecessary because I felt so good and had no symptoms or problems. I was shocked to find I had a PSA of 15.4 and advised by my doctor brother to have a needle biopsy which revealed medium grade cancer.

Had I not taken that PSA test I'd be dead now.



Michael

I had blood work done about a year ago, and the PSA results were provided to me as a “mistake.” The numbers hovered around 8.0, they are now under 4.0. I read a lot on line, joined online communities. I spoke with a urologist, and after all the talk and scary information, I chose to monitor my numbers over time instead of doing any invasive procedures. I have had several DRE, all coming back negative.

Prostate Cancer is typically one of the slowest form of cancers out there – and in my humble opinion, I see a lot of over-treatment happening. Could there be something there, sure, and I may also die of something totally unrelated to Prostate Cancer. In the end, it is a personal choice that we make – and western medicine does not have to be the only manner with which to deal with the issue.

Robert

My digital test was negative, but I had other symptoms, pain at orgasm, frequent urination, so PSA test was prudent. Result was PSA of 18 and follow up biopsy showed four quad involvement. Prostatectomy followed and tumor had spread to seminal and beyond. Radiation followed four years later and now after 22 years I have started hormones at 86. My added years I owe to PSA alert

Randy

PSA being checked saved my life from Prostate Cancer. I was 47 when I was diagnosed by a biopsy. I didn't think about my prostate being where my body would develop cancer. Losing both my mother and aunt to cancer I assumed I was at risk but I didn't know about PSA testing. Thankfully my Doctor found the PSA increase and referred me to a Urologist. Radiation Brachytherapy didn't kill it but this past July I had a radical prostatectomy to remove my prostate and the cancer. My first post-operative PSA was less than 0.1.

The only wish I had is a more humane way of diagnosis vs. the current barbaric biopsy. I had 2 performed and I don't wish that on any man.

Ray

I was diagnosed via PSA with prostate cancer in 1993 and had a procedure in 1994. Had I not had a PSA, I feel sure my cancer would have spread and I would not be here today. PSA is not a sure thing, but I don't want to be the one having prostate cancer, not knowing it and allowing it to spread. As long as the patient and Doctor's discuss the gains/losses, goods/bad for all the procedures, then the patient should have the final decision.

Anonymous

In January 2007, at the age of 67 my PSA had gone up from 2.41 to 3.78 in 16 months. My GP referred me to a urologist who performed a biopsy. The result was cancer in 2 out of twelve nodes Gleason 8. In February of 2009, I had non-nerve sparing robotic surgery to remove the prostate; the pathology report confirmed the Gleason 8. I had extra prostatic extension but negative margins. Since surgery, my PSA has been at .005. If it wasn't for the PSA test my aggressive Gleason 8 PCa would have probably spread to other parts of my body including my bones. I count my blessings for finding out about this silent killer when I did and I think the PSA test and my doctor's awareness is what led to my discovery.

Anonymous

My father and grand-father both had prostate cancer. I have tested every year for this via a simple blood test (inexpensive, too). When the trajectory headed up on my chart, the doctor did a biopsy and found cancer in most samples. My PSA had gone from 1.0 to 11 over a 5 year period. Had it not been for this, I would not have had a biopsy.

Robert

My PSA never got out of the "normal" range but over the course of two years my PSA was steadily going up a few percentage points. Thanks to my urologist he recommended a biopsy, found cancer, removed the prostate and afterwards found out the prostate was loaded with cancer. I was 50 years old at the surgery date and am now 53! Please do not do away with PSA testing.



Max

I think that whoever decided that PSA Testing is not necessary, is just plain stupid. I am an 8 year prostate cancer survivor who would not have been here had it not been for a PSA test, thereby finding out early. The same happened to me with a chest x-ray that found a malignant spot in my lung thereby which meant I had stage 1A lung cancer which is not fine since it was detected early and am now doing well. PSA test, though not 100% accurate is certainly better than no test at all.

Mark

PSA testing was the only thing that caught my prostate cancer, which the urologist told me, was “slow growing”but post-surgery turned out to have some slow growing cells, but most was aggressive! There also was virtually no nodule and was not picked up on rectal exam as it was on the internal side of the gland. The PSA test is far from perfect, but it is the best we have at the moment and made the difference in my life.

Jim

In 2001, when I was 46, our father told us that he had begun treatment for prostate cancer. I mentioned it to my doctor at my annual physical, and he took a PSA, which came back at 16.8. I had a biopsy and cancer was discovered. The DRE was normal. I underwent a prostatectomy and radiation afterwards. Ten years later, I’m a very healthy 56-year-old. If I hadn’t had the PSA, I believe I’d be dead or suffering from terminal cancer at this age.

Anonymous

My husband requested the PSA in 2004 because of his family history: his father and several uncles had prostate cancer. His primary physician was reluctant to run the test saying it was expensive and inaccurate, but he ran the test anyway and it was well within the normal range. The following year his PSA was rechecked — again reluctantly — and his PSA had doubled. As a precaution, he was referred to an urologist for a biopsy. His Gleason score was a surprising 9.

He underwent Tomotherapy which destroyed the tumor and his prostate in January 2006 and was declared cancer free that year. However, in 2007 the follow-up CT and Bone Scans revealed the cancer had metastases throughout his skeletal system. After all of the available standard treatments and an experimental trial of IMC-A12 with Mitoxantrone, and a very brief trial of a PARP inhibitor — the disease metastases through his spinal cord.

We knew from the beginning that his particular prostate cancer would win in the end — but he participated in several experimental trials and basically gave his life for research. Would he have been better off without that initial PSA? No, he would have died a

miserable death while his physicians determined the cause of his vague aches and pains. Anyone who's had back pain can attest it's just not taken very seriously! The opportunity for valuable research would also have been lost. It angers me that so little emphasis is placed on men's health and wellbeing.

Anonymous

After several years of being treated for "prostatitis" and PSA reaching 8.7, a biopsy came back with PCA and a number of "abnormal" cells. Considering the possible options, family history of cancer and discussions with others who had chosen different treatments,

I chose to have it removed. The deed was done 7-2002. There are days when I think a different choice might have been better, but overall my choice was best for me. There is no doubt in my mind that the PSA test is the reason my diagnosis was made when it was and I feel, extended my life.

If memory serves me correctly, it has not been that many years since mammograms for early detection of breast cancer were controversial. Until a noted person, was it Betty Ford, went public with her diagnosis, breast cancer was not that public. My feeling is, until men can become more public in dealing with the side effects of PCA, the fight to continue coverage of the PSA test will probably be lost. For almost 10 years my PSA has been "undetectable."

Anonymous

I am presently being treated for D2 stage 4 prostate cancer. My primary care (FORMER) just blew it off when my PSA went from 2.4 to 22 and didn't sound any alarm even when it went up to 55. I think to stop testing for PSA is the dumbest thing Next they will be telling women not to have mammograms.

David

My father died a horrible death from prostate cancer 27 years ago before the PSA test was available as he was not diagnosed until his cancer metastasized throughout his body. His final unspoken message to me was to monitor myself so I have been getting the easy and inexpensive tests for 23 years. In 2007 my PSA spiked and it had gone up over .75 in the previous two years.

I had a biopsy and had prostate cancer in three quadrants but it was contained. I received radiation treatments with Cyberknife in 2008 and am doing very well four years later. My PSA is .30 and I am neither incontinent nor impotent. The PSA test allowed me to monitor my own health so I did not have to experience a horrible death like my father.

The PSA test is only a guideline for prostate cancer it is not a problem in itself, in fact it does for many men what it did for me, alerted me about prostate cancer before it metastasized. The problem is with how doctors interpret it. There are other issues to be

considered like the velocity of change, the Gleason score, and family history. Doctor's need to be trained and they need to inform patients on how to gather information and educate themselves. Your target for concern is focused on the wrong part of diagnosis; the test is simply a test. How it is interpreted and used is the issue.

I am walking living proof of the importance of the PSA test; it should not be abandoned at all until a better test is found.

David

My PSA began a slow upward drift at age 55. At 57 it was still only 2.64, but the rate of change was noticeable from the year before. My family doc said, we'll watch it, and check again next year. I asked for a free PSA test which was on the low side, but did not suggest cancer. Family doc did a DRE which was negative. I had no other symptoms of prostate cancer at this time.

I was still concerned, so I went to see my urologist. He also said that we would watch it, but first wanted to do a DRE. I told him that I just had one, but he was insistent. He discovered a nodule! A biopsy revealed a Gleason 9!

Had I not been diligent with PSA testing, I would have had full blown metastatic prostate cancer before it was discovered.

PSA testing absolutely saved my life.

Eldon

Twenty-one years ago I attended a free prostate screening event and discovered I might have prostate cancer. A PSA test, ultra-sound, and biopsy confirmed it and I had surgery. Regular PSA checkups revealed a rapid doubling value and four years later I underwent radiation therapy. Then two years later with still rapid doubling I had complete hormone blockage which I followed for two years. During this time every six months my PSA remained at a very low level. I have continued the six month test and three years ago my PSA began rising. I took Lupron shots for three years and now am watching a slow rise. Without my six month tests, I may not have made it this long.

My father died of prostate cancer, so I feel the test gives me hope and guidance for treatment from my urologist. I would be fearful without the test.

James

Early stage prostate cancer HAS NO SYMPTOMS. Yet, early stage cancer can be treated and cured. Late stage cancer cannot be cured.

At age 50, in prime health, I needed a physical for a new position. It required a physical exam. My enlightened doctor suggested a PSA. They were drawing blood for other tests.

My PSA came back at 39 with a Gleason 8. I was successfully treated and I am here to see my children get married, grandchildren born, and finish my career.
IF I DID NOT HAVE THAT PSA TEST, I WOULD NOT BE HERE TODAY.
Men have the **RIGHT** to know if they have cancer and if they do to make a treatment decision that is right for them.

Anonymous

In June 2010 my husband, who was then 59, had been suffering with dreadful pains in his back and legs plus nausea for many months.

A month earlier he had been admitted to hospital with suspected Gall bladder problems which proved negative and had also been treated with physiotherapy for the leg pain for weeks. His PSA on diagnosis was 67, if he had been offered this simple blood test from age 50 which is what our consultant suggests should be available for all men we would possibly be looking forward to a long and happy retirement instead of a very uncertain future.

He was finally diagnosed with Advanced Metastatic Prostate Cancer after a bone scan.



Bob

It was my first PSA test at age 50 that led to the ultimate discovery and confirmation 18 months later that I had cancer. And it was continued rising PSA results that kept the doctors involved and on the path to a diagnosis. So without that single/first PSA test and subsequent rising PSA test results driving the doctors to continue looking for the issue, there's no way anyone would have known I had a 4+3 Gleason score tumor. And I certainly would not have pursued any course of action. Like why would I? Never- ever were there any physical signs that anything was amiss....talk about a silent killer. I can see it now. "Hi Doctor, I'm in the best physical shape of my life, my half marathon times continue to improve month after month, so please would you consider doing some exploratory surgery or invasive analysis just to make sure I don't have prostate cancer?"

Yeah, right.

In the past eight years I have tested virtually zero when it comes to PSA, and now wonder what I'm supposed to do as a follow up; hope, trust in the all mighty that there's no chance of recurrence, wait till there's some other physical sign, what exactly am I supposed to do? What the heck, why do any testing for anything, if not to drive early possible diagnosis and increased levels of testing?

Final thought.

I saw my father pass due to complications from prostate cancer, and while the official coroner's report stated heart failure, it was heart failure due to those cancer based complications. And while he fought cancer for many years, I can only think without his early PSA tests, and the follow on procedures, the prostate cancer would have killed many years earlier.

Clifford

My prostate cancer was not detected by a PSA test. My PSA levels remained relatively low through the years. But symptoms lead me to a young urologist that found an abnormal prostate from a DRE exam. A biopsy confirmed an early stage prostate cancer. I'm in favor of using science data to best determine who needs more testing. Family history, symptoms, and DRE are better indicators than the PSA test.

We need a better test for cancerous cells. Instead of spending money unnecessarily on PSA tests, let's spend that money on developing a better test.

Anonymous

Prostate Cancer has affected my family in a huge way. My paternal grandfather passed away from prostate Cancer many years ago. My father, now age 72 was diagnosed with prostate cancer almost 14 years ago. He underwent surgery and is doing well, but has no bladder control. His surgery was major, as the new techniques of robotic surgery

weren't available at that time. He developed kidney cancer as a result of the prostate cancer almost 7 years later.

The kidney cancer was diagnosed when he attended an ultrasound screening hosted by his church. I did a series of 9 ultrasound screenings on the body all with ultrasound technology. A large mass was found on his right kidney, which again resulted in another surgery. Thankfully the cancer was contained in only one kidney. My brother at age 45 was also diagnosed with this terrible disease. He did have the robotic surgery and other than bladder issues is doing well.

Having these screenings done are so very important. They are preventive, but should be done annually at every annual physical. Insurance should be covering these screenings as they are lifesaving. These screenings keep us aware of what is going on and if abnormalities are found, help identify them before they become major. They save lives, period.

Carl

Without PSA testing, my prostate cancer, a Gleason 9, would not have been found until it was too late and I assume I would not be alive today. PSA testing should not be dropped until a better test is available.

Michael

I was one of the low risk men who under the proposed rules would not get tested. At 51 years old, with no cancer in my family, my doctor ordered the test. PA came back at 14.28, a subsequent biopsy showed a Gleason 9, aggressive cancer, and I am still here after surgery, radiation, hormone and advance therapies. My cancer was found in time to control, not to cure because it had already spread.

Today, 15 years later, I am impotent, but I am alive, I have seen my granddaughters grow up and while we are watching the cancer start to spread as the treatments fail a PSA test bought me some great years that I would have missed without it. As long as the doctors understand what the test results mean and can provide a reasonable explanation of the need for repeated tests and careful consideration of what to do if PSA is rising and what the side effects of treatment can be, there is no better test to help save lives.

Anonymous

In my annual physical in 2000, my primary care physician performed a digital rectal examination. He felt hardness on one side of my prostate. I got a PSA test. It was six plus. I was referred for a biopsy. The results showed aggressive cancer. I had an MRI and a bone scan. Both indicated the cancer was still encapsulated. For me the choice was clear — surgical removal. I wanted to be cancer free. I am still here. The PSA test helped me. In

my view it is a good tool to have in the toolbox. Let's keep it in medicine until something better is found.

Steve

My story is a little different. My PSA did not rise significantly and my prostate was not enlarged, yet I was having difficulty in urinating. My urologist did a scope and found a small growth internally in my prostate. He advised me that they were most generally benign and advised me to have "green-light laser" surgery. This process "burns the growth away and is supposed to make it easier to urinate. He also said that this surgery negatively affects the ability to get an erection only about 1% of the time. PSA was 2.25.

This is where I made my mistake! I believed that this "doctor" knew what he was doing. I had the green-light surgery, no biopsy was done, and I went down the road thinking everything was going to be peaches and cream. I haven't had an erection or been able to have intercourse with my wife since! Congratulations, I'm part of the 1%!

Now, fast forward 2 1/2 years. I had my PSA checked in April of 2009 and it was 2.5. I was told that was normal for a man 58 years of age. During the month of June, I won't bore you with the build-up, about how sick I got and couldn't figure out why I was always tired, had no energy, ambition, weak and had a headache that only ice-packs would relieve. I finally went my family doctor to have a blood test to see if it might be spinal meningitis.

To make a long story short, by now the prostate cancer has spread to my bone marrow.... throughout my entire body. My PSA is 285 and I'm told that I have 1 1/2 to 2 years to live and that the cancer has been growing for 3-4 years. I tell you all of this to say... PSA test aren't perfect. They don't work all of the time. BUT... it's the best damn thing that we have going right now! That and be your own best doctor!!!! Don't just set back and believe everything your (possible dumbass) urologist or doctor might tell you! Be willing to "FIRE" your current doctor if you don't feel comfortable with what he/she might be telling you.

The good news is that it has been nearly 2 1/2 years since I was diagnosed and I am feeling GREAT and hope to be starting a new treatment that I expect to give me 3 - 5+ more years of great live and I STILL DO MY OWN RESEARCH!!! New testing is on the horizon, better than PSA blood testing; there are new and exciting treatments that are coming down the pipeline..... Just stay positive, stay informed, stay educated and "STAY IN CHARGE OF YOUR OWN HEALTH!!!"

Anonymous

I was diagnosed 17 years ago. Thanks to a low PSA I remained relaxed and continued to live a 'normal' life. With no PSA I suspect my concern would have been far greater. It allowed me to function in a normal mode.



Jack

I had my first PSA when I went to my Urologist for a kidney stone problem and I think I was about 53 years old. My PSA was 3.5 and my urologist suggested I go for a biopsy just to make sure everything was alright. So I did and everything was fine. At the time my uncle on my mother's side had Prostate Cancer he was about 70 years old. Then my brother who was 10 years older than me had Prostate Cancer. I didn't go to my urologist for a couple of years, but I had blood work done for my regular doctor.

Well I had the PSA script still in my wallet and gave it to the lab when I had the blood work. My PSA went to 4.5 and my urologist suggested that I have a biopsy done because it went up and to make sure there was no cancer. I asked him if my Prostate felt different and he said no, in fact he said he didn't think the biopsy would show I had cancer. When he called me and told me I had cancer I couldn't believe it. If it wasn't for the PSA test the cancer might have moved out of my Prostate and made my life miserable. Perhaps I wouldn't be around to tell you my story.

The PSA test saved my life.

John

Five years ago I went to my doctor for an annual physical. The only abnormality discovered in my exam was a PSA level one-tenth of a point into the abnormal range. My doctor said it was probably nothing, but he suggested I come back in a few months to have it checked again. When I was tested again my level had risen. I went to a urologist, who suggested I get a biopsy on my prostate. It turned out I not only had prostate cancer, but it was growing at such an abnormally fast rate that it was almost at the point of metastasizing. I had to have a prostatectomy as soon as possible. Had I not had that first PSA test and then three months later a follow-up second one, I would not be here today.

Rick

If it wasn't for PSA testing, I would probably be dead or close to it by now. Back in 2008, I turned 65 and arranged for the Medicare sponsored medical exam. I have been a

healthy male with absolutely no health issues that I was aware of. As part of the medical exam, blood was drawn and my doctor selected PSA test as one of the test criteria. The PSA test result came back as 34 which was a big red flag that something was up. Immediately after that I visited the urologist where he did the finger wave and did feel an abnormality. A biopsy later determined that I had stage 4 advanced prostate cancer. Of course my prognosis is not great, but without the PSA test, I probably would not have gotten the start on attacking the cancer until later on and time is of the essence here. Getting rid of the PSA test just doesn't make any sense to me as it seems like it will do more good than harm.

Wendy

My husband was diagnosed in 1996 at the age of 46. He had a Gleason 9 and a base PSA of 24.4. A hard nodule was found while at the urologist for another condition. Prior to that we had no knowledge of prostate cancer or of the PSA. He died at April 2007 at the age of 56 1/2. He left behind three sons who were 18, 19 and 23 at the time. There is no doubt in my mind that if he had started having yearly PSAs and DREs that he would still be alive. Instead he was given a death sentence. The PSA may be flawed but it saves lives. The death statistics have decreased since the PSA had been used.

Sam

The PSA test provided an alert in that it doubled from 1.8 to 3.6 in the year between physicals. After eliminating infections and other reasons for a PSA to rise, a biopsy confirmed that there was a tumor. The Tumor had invaded the capsule wall and was trying to exit. After removal of the prostate the past nine years of PSA tests has confirmed that the threat of prostate cancer spreading appears to be gone.

The PSA test not only gave me early warning before the cancer could spread it also reassures me that the cancer has not reoccurred.

Given that success in fighting cancer is early detection while it is contained, why would any sane person remove this early warning from blood tests?

Bob

PSA test may not be the greatest but it is all we have for now & is a guideline for Urologist to go by. Without the Test my prostate cancer would not have been found. I am now in treatment because it was found & have high hopes that all will be good. I don't know who you people think you are to do away with one of the few guides we men have to find prostate cancer. Prostate cancer cases each year are more, then breast cancer but breast cancer gets all the recognition.



Anonymous

My PSA test taken 10 years ago was at 10, in a week it moved up to 12. I then had a DRE, and a biopsy, both confirming I had cancer with a Gleason score of 4+5 = 9. Follow-up surgery, radiation, hormone, and most recently chemo treatments have kept me alive. In particular the chemo dramatically lowered my PSA score, and also reduced the numbers of mets, and size of the cancer. The reduced mets and cancer size were confirmed with bone and CT scans, and coincided with the PSA dropping from 130.31 to 2.21.

The PSA scores are not full proof, but they're the best we have for now, and help men and their doctors determine course of treatment, if any.

Erik

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer 2 and 1/2 years ago at age 55, because my then-primary physician, whom I saw every 4 months to monitor my type 2 diabetes, was unbeknownst to me running a PSA test, something I knew nothing of, every time I saw him. At one meeting, as he read the blood test results, which were so far excellent, he suddenly murmured an ominous, "Oh, oh," and proceeded to tell me that I might have prostate cancer, due to a rapid rise in my PSA across a short time span, explaining the test to me for the first time. He sent me to a urologist of his recommendation for testing.

A biopsy revealed minute amounts of extremely slow growing cancer in my prostate. Nevertheless, the urologist insisted that I must get treatment immediately, either in the form of surgery or radiation seeds. He forcefully recommended surgery, saying he didn't do the radiation himself, thinking it not as good, but he did say he could recommend

a doctor to talk with who did do the radiation, if I wanted. I did, and took his recommendation. At the same time, I asked why; if the cancer was so small and so nonaggressive, we couldn't just keep an eye on it for a while. He reacted forcefully, telling me that do so would be "irresponsible," probably fatal, and that I would have to find another doctor if I wanted that.

The radiation doctor enthusiastically insisted that his treatment was best and bid hard for my patronage. When I and my husband asked him why we couldn't just monitor the situation, he said that that wasn't done by respectable physicians, though he couldn't explain why to our satisfaction.

I returned to my urologist, this time with my husband, after research we did on the Web revealed the "watchful waiting" and "active surveillance" approaches. (I had not known about them when I asked my questions about monitoring.) He professed never to have heard of them, nor could he answer any of my questions about how surgery or radiation might affect my sexual life as a gay man. Indeed, despite practicing for many years in Manhattan, he said that he had never been asked such a question before. When I told him that I was most interested in finding a doctor willing to at least entertain such an approach, he suddenly said that if I wanted, he would do active surveillance with me, despite having so forcefully condemned it in the previous visit. I declined.

I wanted a doctor who had actually done it before, if I was going to pursue that course.

On the Web, I discovered something called HiFU, offered in Europe, Canada, the Caribbean, and South America, that was still in clinical trials in America. I found one such trial was accepting applicants. I made an appointment to see if I was eligible for that trial. Upon meeting with the doctor running the trial, I also asked about active surveillance.

After thorough discussion, he agreed that I was an ideal candidate for it, after explaining that even Hi-Fu, though less invasive, had possible unpleasant, permanent consequences. He told me that he had been using active surveillance with qualified patients for more than 20 years, and that no one had ever progressed to metastasized cancer, though obviously some had eventually had to have surgery or radiation.

I have been pursuing active surveillance with him since, and all has been fine, with my PSA tests consistently the lowest they have ever been, and subsequent biopsies showing even less cancer than previous ones. I often think that if I had never had those PSA tests, I would be unaware that I had any cancer and would not have to go through twice yearly visits and blood tests, as well as periodic biopsies.

It's not for me to say whether anybody should or should not have a PSA test. But I can completely understand the reasons behind the recommendation, particularly because my first two urologists so fiercely tried to push me into their treatment specialty, without concern for my particular needs. I have no history of prostate cancer in my family, and am generally in excellent health except for the diabetes, which I control well. Yet I was pushed forcefully to do aggressive treatment that could change my life forever, and not for the better.

It took a lot of mental effort, and much emotional aggravation, to resist their pressure, research things for myself, and think clearly as to what would be best for me. I am very happy with the choice I made. I still regret having had to make the choice at all.



Jim

Without PSA testing in October 2003, I would not be here writing this. During a routine checkup, the blood work completed showed a PSA of 16. Initially it was thought to be an infection but when I went to a urologist it was determined that a biopsy was necessary. I had no signs of any problems and thought that the disease was an “old man’s” disease. For my 51st birthday the diagnosis was prostate cancer. It was aggressive and my prostate was removed in February 2004. Except for a “blip on the screen” in 2005 everything has been fine. I often think what would have happened without the PSA screening. As my urologist told me, by the time I would have had symptoms it would have been too late. Although people think this is not the best test available, it is a starting point.

John

My father died of prostate cancer, before the advent of the PSA test. My brother had his prostate removed after a rising PSA indicated the possibility of cancer, and a biopsy confirmed.

With this family history, I began a routine annual test of PSA at age 50. By age 61, my PSA began to rise. Initial biopsy did not reveal any malignancy, but my PSA continued to rise. A second biopsy 6 months later revealed malignancy, and I began Proton treatments in April 2004.

I continue to annually review my PSA, which remains below 1.0 since treatment.

Linda

My husband Dave has a strong family history of Prostate Cancer. His father passed away from PC. His two brothers also have PC. Dave began his PSA testing at age 50 because back then that was what the doctors recommended. He was diagnosed at age 58 when he had a spike in his PSA. He's now 61 and still battling the beast. If he hadn't had the PSA test performed I would be a widow now. The PSA test is an absolute MUST until another diagnostic tool is available.

Richard

If I would have been given a PSA Test along with my physicals my prostate cancer would have been found earlier. I was given a PSA Test only after I had developed symptoms. I wish insurance companies and doctors had been more willing to pay for/give the test.

Anonymous

My PSA was always very low (around the 1.0 range) until age 71-72, when a low reading doubled in less than a year. Biopsy revealed Gleason score of 4+3. Prostatectomy and follow up radiation did not render PSA undetectable, so had to take Lupron. PSA undetectable for about 9 months, but now PSA became detectable, so back on another Lupron. PSA is now the sole test to gauge if existing cancer cells are dormant or growing.

Milton

In the summer of 2003, when I was 85 years old, a routine PSA showed a sharp rise to about 6. A biopsy showed an aggressive cancer (Gleason number 9). I underwent IMRT radiation and chemical castration and was symptom free for about five years, after which my PSA began to rise again. I then had cryotherapy with results that did not last, following which I went to a medical oncologist, who put me on prednisone, which appears to be working. I am approaching my ninety-third birthday and am having unrelated heart problems that could be fatal, in which case my cancer will be cured'

I have survived for eight good years. I am convinced that if I had not been tested for PSA I would now be long dead.

Louis

Thanks to the PSA test my prostate cancer was detected early. Without the test I may not be here today. I feel like it saved my life and will save many more. Right now it's all we have and it needs to be continued until there is something better. It indicated a rise in my PSA and the doctor felt it was reason enough for further test which proved I had Prostate Cancer. Early detection is the key to survival and the PSA test will help do just that.



Anonymous

My intern for the past 10 years has been testing my PSA with the lipid panel for my annual physical. The PSA I never really knew what it was. However, one time I looked at my blood test and I noticed my PSA was 2.86 and it was always around 1.3 for the past 10 years. My doctor said not to worry about it. I was 59 yrs. old at the time. I went to a urologist for my annual exam and he gave me some antibiotics thinking it might be an infection from my recent knee replacement surgery. The PSA did come down to 2.3. He then tested me 90 days later and it was 2.6.

He said he would not worry about it; however I did and got a 2nd opinion. This doctor tested it in 90 days and it was 2.0 and then 2.6. After a year, the doctor decided I needed a biopsy which I really did not want, but he said that would be the only way to really verify if I had cancer. I had the biopsy and yes I had two cores that were very small but cancer.

I freaked out and there is not a day that goes by that I do not think about it. I have had two biopsies since the first and the cancer is still showing however I chose to do watchful waiting. The doctor says I qualify for that however there is no sure way of knowing if the cancer is aggressive or not. It is a gamble and I know it. However the surgery is too scary for me right now and all the literature confuses me. I went to City of Hope and the head surgeon nationally acclaimed said I would do well with the surgery and wanted to operate. I went to a major medical center and met with the top surgeon of the Golden Standard nerve sparing approach and he said I could do watchful waiting.

Every doctor has a different opinion and it is really up to the individual. Most of my friends say I am crazy, get it out. I am taking it one day at a time or 90 days at a time until I

have my next PSA test. I changed my eating habits and eat all greens, white meat, no sugar, no sweets, (cheat a little) no alcohol or smoke, exercise daily and my PSA went as low as 1.0 The doctor says that really does not matter and I still have cancer, however he feels if it starts seeing activity in the PSA upward and the biopsy (every 12-18 months) shows more cores or Gleason 7 than I am having the surgery.

The PSA test has changed my life! Not to the better in this case. I would rather have not known and just lived life. On the other hand maybe it will save my life, however the effects of the surgery are not pleasant. The older I get I can take the effects and they are more percentage wise to happen. The younger you are the better you will bounce back. I am told from one doctor who was very honest with me is that incontinence will go away within a year 95% of the time in my age group 60-70. Impotency odds are not so good and that the % of impotency in my age group is 35% even with taking Viagra.

Esteban

The PSA test has save my life. It was a PSA test result of 35 and the biopsy that found stage 3 cancer in my prostate. My prostate was the normal size for a man my age, 55 yrs. old at the time, but the biopsy showed cancer. My Doctor explained all the treatments and their pros and cons. I elected to "remove the damn thing."

Well thanks to the Da Vinci Robotic procedure (I highly recommend it) I am still here.

They found the prostate was 75% cancerous; it had spread to my lymph nodes, seminal vesicles, some of the nerves in the area and a spot on my colon. All removed. Yes I cannot have an erection and am a bit incontinent, but it is a small price to pay for being alive to be with my wife and play with my grandchildren.

Anonymous

In 2002 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer and was treated with implantation of radioactive seeds. So far so good. Every 3 to 6 months I am checking my PSA, the only evidence at this time that I am still off the hook. Until it will be a new test which could prove the same as PSA test, for the peace of mine of people as I am, the PSA test has to be legal and payable by insurance.

Roger

A sudden rise in my PSA alerted my doctor to suggest a biopsy. The biopsy indicated that indeed I did have prostate cancer. I then chose robotic surgery, which I feel ultimately saved my life. The pathology report after my surgery indicated that in fact I had a fast growing form of prostate cancer. This took place over four years ago. My surgeon/urologist has me submit PSA results every six months to make sure that there is no recurrence. I think my family physician saved my life by requesting PSA results. The digital exam did not give any indication that there was a problem.

Patrick

I had a routine PSA test every year starting at age 60, it stayed at 4.0 until age 65 when it jumped to 5.0. My digital exam showed nothing and I had no other symptoms. I opted for a biopsy and we found Gleason 7 cancer. I was treated with radiation and seeds and have been cancer free (PSA at .2) ever since. I have had minimal side effects. Bottom line regular PSA testing saved my life!!!

Brian

PSA testing led to my diagnosis of an aggressive Gleason 8 cancer in 2005 that had spread beyond the prostate bed. The PSA rating of 4.34 was barely above the 4.0 threshold used by most family doctors to diagnose a potential problem, but was enough to refer me to a urologist for a biopsy. Subsequent radiation and hormone therapy led to a good outcome. Since I had no symptoms other than a high PSA number, that test absolutely saved my life.

Anonymous

My husband went in for his yearly exam and had a PSA test. That was 2 years ago. His PSA came back extremely high. He had a biopsy which came back cancerous. The bone test and it showed the cancer had already spread to the bone. He was immediately put on a treatment plan and "so far so good." If not for the PSA test finding, I have no doubt he would not be alive today.



Glen

My father had prostate cancer as did I. The PSA tests followed by a biopsy last December confirmed my cancer with a Gleason score of 4+3=7! At a healthy 73 years of age and several ancestors who lived into their late 80s and mid-90s, my cancer needed treatment lest I die young! Without my PSA tests, I probably would have been gone in 5 to 10 years. Now I have 25 years +/- to look forward to. I finished my proton therapy at LLUMC with no side effects on July 1, 2011. The PSA test will monitor my future.

Thomas

I have prostate cancer which was discovered with a PSA test. The pathology report after surgery indicated that my cancer was more aggressive than the biopsy (post PSA test) had indicated. If not for the PSA test I would not have had any treatment and I expect that my life would have been significantly shortened.

Paul

The PSA test was responsible for early detection of high grade cancer in 2000 which, as a urological oncologist myself, I am certain would have been less successfully treated if allowed to present clinically, with symptoms that an advanced stage prostate cancer patient would have.

David

At 41 years old I went to my Dr. for blood work to check my cholesterol. Without even asking me, he checked PSA and it came back at an 11. I had a tumor with a Gleason score of 9/10. It is 2 1/2 years later and if he didn't check the box for PSA there is a very good chance I would not be here right now.

It is incomprehensible to me why they might put limitations on this test. How would I have known that I had advance prostate cancer at 41 years old? I certainly value my life and so do my two boys who are now 9 and 10 years old.

Anonymous

PSA testing and family history were the two factors that enabled me to be diagnosed early, treated and cured of prostate cancer at the young age of 49. The combination of those two factors allowed me to watch my progress over a 7 yr. period of a PSA baseline of 1.0 that jumped to 1.6 and then 2.3 in a 3 month timeframe. The ensuing biopsy confirmed my diagnosis of prostate cancer. I was otherwise symptom-less.

Terry

PSA testing has kept me alive – literally! At age 51 I switched Primary Care Physicians, and my new doc ordered a PSA during my opening physical with him – it came back 4.5 – slightly raised. Yes, this can come from a number of issues – not only Prostate Cancer...so we began a 3 month wait – and then ran the PSA again...a 5.3. Ok – it went up – why? Go to see a urologist, who does ultrasound analysis of my bladder and the Prostate area...start a month of Cipro to see if it might be inflammation of the Prostate or another BPH related problem.

Redrew the PSA a week following the end if the Cipro, and it's now a 6.9...NOW it was time for a biopsy...the PSA was a diagnostic tool used to determine this course of treatment.

As it turned out, my biopsy was positive for Cancer – and although in August bone scan and MRI showed it contained within the capsule, by the time I had an open radical prostatectomy in the first week of October, it had escaped the capsule, started up the neck of the bladder, was in the muscle wall surrounding the Prostate, and had invaded the seminal vesicles and 2 lymph nodes...my biopsy Gleason scores were a 6, four 7's and an 8, but following post-op pathology, it was determined that I actually had a Gleason 9 cancer – the scale goes from 1-10, with 10 being most aggressive, so mine's really bad! I went from nothing in Feb to full-on cancer in 6 months.

Is this slow growing? Absolutely not! If I had not been tested when I was, I truly believe I would be near death now – I had NO symptoms of any sort – and since diagnosis, I've met many people with Gleason scores of 7 or higher. Where on earth do these "experts" get their data? Yes I know people with very low PSA numbers, but this shows they don't need to go any further.

Gunther

In 1998, an under the radar 3.56 PSA lead to the diagnosis of a stage IV cancer that had invaded the seminal vesicles and bladder neck. Now, I monitor recurrent cancer with the PSA. I am thankful I have the tool.

Marvin

The PSA is only one tool and the less aggressive tool that we have today. I do not remember when I started having PSA as a part of my blood work, but in 2005 it became high enough that I had biopsy done. That is very aggressive to me. It came back positive. So without PSA and DRA I would not know if I had prostate cancer.

Is it 100% – no.

It is only one tool.



Ed

My father died of PCa at age 72. I have been getting PSA tests since early 50's. In 2006 PSA showed a significant increase and a biopsy showed PCa in small amount. I opted for active surveillance and have been on that since. I get PSA every 3 mos. and a biopsy annually. I and my urologist use the PSA as a guide. It has remained relatively stable and if it shows significant increase we agree to another biopsy.

PSA has been good for me, but I understand it and only use it as a guide. Without the PSA I would have no guide. I am 70 now and have been on AS for five years, but grow increasingly concerned as I approach the age my father was when he died. I want to continue to use the PSA as a guide unless something better comes out. I am in excellent health and hope to stay that way.

Al

I was in my 60's and was being given a DRE at the time of an each annual physical. When I mentioned that my father had prostate cancer, I was thereafter given a PSA test at each physical. I knew only that my father has his prostate removed and just assumed it was due to cancer. At age 66 my DRE was negative for cancer but my PSA has risen considerably. As a precaution I was referred to a urologist. A sonogram and DRE appeared to be negative but a biopsy was done – results positive. A second biopsy was done to see if the cancer had spread – results positive. An operation for lymph node removal was carried out to see if I was treatable – with results finally negative. After brief hormone therapy and radiation treatment an aggressive form of prostate cancer has been eliminated. I now have been cancer free for 10 years and enjoy good health.

If I had not had an annual PSA test done, I firmly believe I would be dead and unable to make this response.

George

I can't imagine not being able to have annual PSA tests! Although they have always been negative, the peace of mind they bring is priceless. It's one less cancer threat to worry about when there are so many cancers that cannot be detected until it's too late! At my age, impotence & even incontinence, is a small price to pay vs. the alternative. I'm told all men eventually get prostate cancer, but it's still important that we prevent it as long as possible.

Maybe, if men had more national awareness & recognition (such as a "prostate cancer month" or "marches on prostate cancer" as are done all the time for women), we might someday have as long a life expectancy as women?

Robert

My prostate cancer was detected at an early stage. Given my relatively young age, surgery was recommended and done. Because of this test, I now have a longer life expectancy.

Steven

If I had not had my PSA test done, I would not have found my prostate cancer until it was too late. It increased by .6 in 1 month and was considered pretty aggressive. Yes, my dad died of other causes at 82 and had prostate cancer. But his was slow growing. How is one to know? Roll the dice? I think not. Women aren't being asked to forego their mammograms (they were asked to a couple years ago) and why should men forego their PSA's...all in the hope that they don't have cancer. I was 59 when mine was found. With my life expectancy of 80 or so, would I have lived that long?

In my case, it wasn't likely. Why should I or anyone have to take a chance with their life like is being mandated. Must we men face a terrible death for the sake of testing? There are many options to follow up an elevated PSA test. I had biopsies that confirmed my diagnosis. If it hadn't been detected, the outcome would have been much worse than the ED I've suffered.

Don

I am alive today due to a PSA test done during a regular physical. It caught my very aggressive cancer in its early stage before it had escaped from the prostate. If I had gone much longer without it being detected, the cancer would have been out in my body.

Ben

I started screening for prostate cancer because my father had died of it. I had no symptoms right up until I was diagnosed with Stage 4 prostate cancer. If I had not been screened I would probably not be writing this today.

Gerry

My PSA began escalating 9 years ago when I was 68 years old. A rectal exam noted a nodule and a biopsy found cancer. Gleason score of 8 Two specialist determined that the cancer had not left the prostate gland. I choose triple hormone blockade treatment which worked well but in 2007 the cancer appeared to be active so I had radiation. To this point my PSA has remained 0.01.

My biggest problem is very low testosterone. I could not agree with my present doctor that shots and then permanent implants would be the best so I am seeing a new doctor next week. I believe if undetected by PSA, the cancer would have spread and I would not be writing this note.

George

It was the change in my PSA value that revealed that I had early stage PC. I had robotic surgery and have never looked back. Full function, no incontinence and the best part was that I got rid of something that never got along with me most of my adult life.

Anonymous

I'm a quadriplegic. A normal physical prostrate exam can cause me to have Autonomic Dysreflexia which in turn causes extremely high blood pressure that can cause stroke or cardiac infarction. PSA is the only alternative to me other that a physical exam under general anesthesia.



Anonymous

After a PSA score of 4.9 my Doctor recommended a Biopsy at age 67, the Biopsy turned out negative to my relief and no further action at this time. At my first colonoscopy at age 50 I learned I had an enlarged prostate and later learned that having an enlarged prostate will give you a higher PSA reading so just because you have a high reading it doesn't mean you have cancer.

Mary

In April of 2005, my husband went to his doctor for a general checkup. He had checkups yearly. When the blood work came back, his PSA was an 8. His doctor suggested a follow up with a urologist. Two months later, after many, many tests, the urologist uttered these words, "well, it's prostate cancer and it's bad." Those words are forever etched in my memory.

He was diagnosed with Stage 4 prostate cancer that day. Bill started treatments with Lupron and responded beautifully. He felt better, PSA's came back better. Then after about two and a half years the numbers started creeping up again. The next treatment for him was Taxotere. Again, he responded well - for a while. After a short time in a clinical trial and various attempts at different chemo's, my dear sweet husband who was the love of my life died almost four years after being diagnosed.

If it were not for the PSA, he would have had no idea he had prostate cancer. I cannot imagine why anyone would think of doing away with the PSA's because they are not 100%. I remember hearing at one time that mammograms were not 100%, yet no one thought about doing away with them. Why? Because that was the only thing we had.

I feel the same way about the PSA's. My husband had no risk factors, no family history of this disease, yet he is dead from it. I have told my son to insist upon PSA testing by the time he's 35, even if he has to pay for it himself. My husband was 49 when he was diagnosed and 53 when he died. Way too young to die from an "old man's disease". Thank you for the opportunity to tell my story.

Anonymous

Since my father and older brother have had prostate cancer; I am keenly aware of a yearly testing for prostate cancer. I do this yearly! If this is no longer available I am at a substantial risk on coming down with this disease.

Anonymous

I'm a prostate cancer survivor. I'd have very likely been dead without this test. My diagnosis of prostate cancer all begin with a PSA test that was too high. Instead of cutting back on giving this test to men, it should be made more available to low income men with government subsidies

Anonymous

I had seed implants some 5 years ago. My PSA went from 4.9 to my present day level of .005; therefore, I'm being discharged this month. Health wise I feel fine; however, it now is difficult for me to maintain an erection. Doing nothing would have bothered me. I'm glad I had the procedure!!

George

I had been getting annual PC screenings when my PSA started rising. When it reached 4.7 I opted for a biopsy and was diagnosed with PC. After lengthy research I opted for surgery and am glad I did. I meet monthly in a prostate cancer support group with men who have been diagnosed, going through treatment, post treatment or in recurrence and they also are glad they made their decisions. I recommend men get the PSA annually.

Mark

I turned 40 years old and felt healthier than I had ever felt in my entire life. My workplace sponsored a health fair and offered multiple blood screenings at a discounted price. I decided to have the entire blood panel run, and the PSA was one of those tests.

All of my blood work showed that I was healthy, but my PSA screen was higher than what they considered a "normal" range. The nurse who showed me my results at the health fair suggested that I should see my doctor to further evaluate why the PSA was elevated.

antibiotics hoping it was an infection causing the elevated score. I ran a 2nd PSA after the antibiotics and the PSA was actually higher instead of lower.... I then asked for an f-PSA to help narrow down if the cause of my elevated level was actually cancer... The f-PSA was actually low, and I knew then that I most likely had Prostate Cancer. I was referred to a urologist, and the DRE was actually normal. There was only one way at that point to know if I had cancer which is a biopsy. The biopsy confirmed that my right side of my prostate was engulfed with cancer. I had no signs, no symptoms, and I was healthy!!!!

The PSA that was run simply because it was offered at my workplace has no doubt added years to my life!!!!!!

How in the world could anyone argue with me that the PSA screen isn't needed? My story is one that should scream from the mountaintops that our doctors should utilize the PSA faithfully, often, and promote it for all men starting at age 40. If men have a family history of cancer (especially if a man has female relatives with breast cancer and men with prostate cancer) I believe an initial PSA screen should be done at age 35. I thank God and my nurse for the PSA screen!

Bob

Because of a PSA test showing a rather high reading, I went ahead and had a prostate biopsy. That biopsy did indicate that I had prostate cancer. After a lot of research of the various treatments, I selected the brachytherapy procedure and had the radioactive seeds inserted just seventeen months ago. So far, my PSA has been down quite low but if I am not able to get further PSA tests, how will I know if the cancer has remained dormant or if it has started growing again??

Robert

The PSA test helped to uncover my cancer and was just below 5 at the time of my surgery. After surgery my PSA went down to .02 and I have continued to get tested every 3 months. My PSA has risen very slowly since then and as the numbers rose gradually the pace quickened. This has caused a lot of stress but then I learned that 1/3 of men experience “biological failure” after treatment, meaning that the PSA rises without any actual evidence of cancer. It is now over ten years since my surgery and my PSA is 1.91 but has been a bit more stable in the last year or so. Doctors don’t tell you that your PSA may rise and yet not indicate cancer and this contributes greatly to the stress.

Kent

PSA started going up over a few years of testing. When it got to 7, my doctor started checking for cancer by taking prostate samples. The second time around, he found cancer. The index check never indicated any problem. The PSA was, in my case, the best way to alert us to a problem. My suggestion is to start PSA earlier enough to have a measure stick to use. Cancer was removed using radiation treatments and also inserting pellets.

Daryl

Because of PSA Testing I was able to follow my rising PSA until it spiked up to 6.9 in 2011. I was 58 years old at the time. My biopsy found a Gleason score of 7 (3+4) with 40% of the sample Gleason Grade 4. This is not benign Prostate Cancer that “you die with” It is the kind that can kill you if not caught in time. If it had not been for routine PSA testing I might not be here today. I have known a few men that were not tested until it was too late, and I would prefer to die from something else.



Don

At the age of 58 I had never had a PSA test. At the time there was already much discussion about the need for and the validity of such a test for an otherwise “healthy male”. I had no symptoms of PCa and was at the urologist for a follow up on a first ever kidney stone diagnosis. He suggested a PSA test and I, reluctantly, agreed. Came back with a 21 and subsequent biopsy revealed cancerous tissue in 12 of 12 samples with a Gleason grade of 7. Scans indicated potential involvement of iliac lymph nodes and DRE positive. I have since had radiation and HT as primary treatment that failed. I am on my second round of HT. QOL is OK but no sexual function and have developed pre-diabetes as a result of hormone not to mention increased potential for colon cancer and heart disease resulting from RT and HT.

Not curable at this time and newer “vaccines” are outrageously expensive for little or no benefit. Most likely have not extended my life expectancy based on my own research but have impacted my QOL.

Perhaps my story would be different if I had tested at age 50 as recommended. By the way I have no insurance and have paid for all of my treatment out of pocket.

James

I’ve been getting PSA tests for years. I realize it isn’t the most accurate predictor of PCa, but it’s certainly better than nothing. I also realize that there are factors besides possible tumors that can skew the test. And they need to be taken into consideration and

addressed. My PSA went up a year ago and it turned out to be a urinary infection that was treated with Cipro. After a 30 day course of Cipro, my PSA was once again “normal” for a 71 years of age.

My main concern is that insurance companies gladly take our money in the form of premiums. But they do their utmost to keep from paying out after said premiums are banked.

Anonymous

It was through PSA testing that my prostate cancer was first discovered. The high numbers led my urologist to other specific tests to determine the real presence of the cancer (biopsy). Without the first “flag” from the PSA test, I wouldn’t have been treated (hormone therapy-seed implant-radiation) and be living cancer-free today.

Jeanette

At 41 years of age, with no previous family history or symptoms, my husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer thanks to the PSA test. Surgery revealed his prostate gland was 80% cancerous. Without the PSA, there’s no way he would have just celebrated his 60th birthday. I understand there are risks, costs and many unknowns, but prudent PSA testing should continue to be available. You never know whose life may be saved by it.

Jim

I had a PSA reading of around 4 for many years. Then after not getting tested for a couple years the next test showed it was a bit over 6. My PCP thought that might be indicating something, even though nothing showed on the DRE (digital rectal exam). So he sent me to a urologist. Another DRE showed nothing but now the PSA was hitting 8. So a biopsy was done, which showed cancer in 3 of 8 cores.

If PSA was not routinely done I would never have known about this cancer till something showed on a DRE, which likely would have been when the PSA was up over 100 and possibly not until the cancer was untreatable.

The decline in Prostate Cancer deaths since the implementation of PSA testing is SO clear I can’t believe any rational person or organization would suggest that we no longer routinely test for PSA. Two of my friends have also found early PC from PSA testing. One of their fathers died from prostate cancer – yes he was old, but he did not “die with it”, he died because of it.

Another friend of mines father died many years ago of “back cancer”. It was what we would not recognize as a typical metastasis for PC to the back. He died before he was 60 years old.

Barry

Although the PSA test is not an exact indication of cancer, it is at least a guide towards making a decision as to identify potential problems. For those of us who already have cancer it is an indicator of improvement or the disease getting worse.

Charles

PSA testing is perfectly OK if doctors would learn how to use the info. My doctors were always ready to do surgery or radiation. I chose a different path. I began a treatment protocol of my own design after lots of research. I used Bromocryptine and Proscar. This is not a recommendation for anyone else to try this unless they fully understand how to use these drugs. I find most doctors do not. Ten years later I found it necessary to proceed with curative treatment.

Once treatment has been done PSA is the only way to track ones status. Thus PSA must be covered at that time.

PSA is not an indicator of cancer and therein lays the problem. Doctors and patients alike want to tie PSA directly to Prostate cancer. Better education of patients and doctors alike will go a long way to improve treatment.

Paul

The PSA test absolutely identified there was a problem that led to biopsy that identified a Gleason 9 cancer that led to radiation that led to triple hormones that led to Cryo that led to light hormones that has contributed to my being here after 12 years. In the beginning and all the steps in between the PSA was the guide.

If we had a test that would identify a low grade cancer then proper surveillance would be appropriate however I am unaware of any such test. The new recommendation suggests it is the test that is at fault for over treatment however it is what is done with the results of the test that may be in error.

I will continue to recommend the routine to my children and grandchildren.

Richard

It gives me piece of mind; my dad died a painful & awful death from prostate cancer!!!! My grandfather had it' as well as my dad's brother, & it's on my mother's side too!!!! It is one of the valuable tools in diagnosing it, & early detection save lives & money, which insurance companies don't like to pay out more they absolutely have to!!!!

Joseph

Checking my PSA is what led to my cancer detection in 2004. My PSA started rising in 2007 indicated a return of the disease. What other method could they have used to detect the original cancer and later the return? NONE. It's the only method my oncologist has to watch the cancer doubling time

John

I had a PSA test during a routine physical that showed elevated PSA numbers. This led to a biopsy of the prostate. The biopsy showed cancer in the prostate. I had Robotic surgery to remove prostate. Upon removal, my doctor discovered through test of the prostate, that the cancer went up to the border. Had I not had the PSA test, my cancer would not have been caught and could have escaped the prostate. PSA test is all we have for now and until we have something better to replace it with we should continue with what we have. Find a replacement not a elimination please.

Philip

I had a radical about 3 years, ago. My doctor was alerted by an accelerating PSA to schedule more frequent appointments for DREs and PSAs. An induration in my prostate was found earlier than otherwise if PSAs had not been done.

Paul

Because I had a PSA over 15 years ago, and then had seed treatment, my life was saved. I am well today, active and volunteering in the PC support area. I am strong advocate of PSA for all men. The results should then be used to make an educated judgment as to what treatment should be undertaken or watchful waiting.



Anonymous

I was 59 years-old when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I learned that my PSA was 5.0 and my Gleason was 3+2 or 5. I did not know anything about prostate cancer then and my wife and I were very scared. There were very few options in those days for primary treatment and I (and my wife) opted to have a radical (“nerve-sparing”) prostatectomy. Laparoscopy and robotics were not available then. In all of those years my PSA has been 0.0 to 0.05 and I know I will not die of prostate cancer.

I have been one of the leaders in our local prostate cancer support group for years and a board member of the statewide prostate cancer coalition in our state. I feel that I have a good to excellent knowledge of the disease these days. My surgery left me impotent and with urinary problems (difficulty in emptying my bladder).

If I had it to again knowing what I know now, I would have opted for active surveillance even with the availability today of brachytherapy, cryotherapy and robotics.

I believe that all men should have the right to have annual PSA’s covered by insurance if they feel that it would be best for them. Our coalition is trying to educate the public in the state with enough information to allow for intelligent decision-making for non-medical people.

Anonymous

Though I am alive, thankfully, because of treatment, I am not happy that I was lied to by my doctors. The side effects of impotence and incontinence were minimized at best by the surgeon and other physicians. Surgery was promoted as the “gold standard” of treatment options. Not so golden by my standards; more like one of the baser metals. At the age of 53, I was not prepared to give up my sexual function or to deal with urinary incontinence.

As for the PSA, my PSA score was 1.0, very low and not high enough to alert anyone that there might be a problem. It was only through digital rectal exam and biopsy follow up that the Gleason score 7 cancer was detected.

Dale

Seems like having a blood test is a wise thing. It was for me because my PSA was increasing from 4 to 30 over 10 years. A biopsy revealed cancer at 74. I was treated with drugs and radiation and it did not affect my sex life. If I would have surgery as advised by some doctors, side effects could have been severe. Just because some men are panicked into drastic measures, it doesn’t make sense to eliminate what might be a lifesaving test for others.

Judy

My husband's prostate cancer was detected 14 years ago at age 45. Yes, 45!! Yes, white, healthy young man totally a-symptomatic. But because his doctor's brother had prostate cancer, the doctor believes in beginning PSA testing at 45 rather than waiting until 50. Yes, the lasting effects of treatments have been less than wonderful, but he is alive!! And new treatments for prostate cancer are surfacing more frequently to give us more time together.

Keep PSA testing, but change the way physicians, especially urologists, rush into treatments before all the possible avenues are explored.

James

I am a doctor and military officer who discovered and successfully treated for prostate cancer because of the PSA. I have a family history of prostate cancer and was getting serial tests. After a period of an increase in score or velocity, even though my value was still normal at 3.1, I got a prostate biopsy. The biopsy was positive for cancer at just 46. I was commended by the chairman of Urology at a major hospital for impeccable monitoring and intervention. I was the ideal candidate for a surgical intervention. My outcome was perfect. Cancer within the organ/gland. Full recovery with erectile and urinary function. Without the PSA, my story could have been very different.

Anonymous

PSA testing has been part of my annual physical exam for many years. In 2010, when I was 69 and in excellent health, it showed an unexplained increase from level 2, where it had been consistently, to level 4. This resulted in a referral to a urologist who, after taking my history and inputting it in his computer, opined that there was only a 35% chance of the reason being cancer. He presented the options of watchful waiting as well as further tests. I opted for a prostate biopsy which disclosed the presence of cancer in what was thought to be about 3% of the gland and Gleason 7 (3 + 4).

After extensive research, I elected surgical removal three months later. Post-operative examination of the surrounding tissue showed no evidence of spread. Pathology confirmed Gleason 7 but revealed the affected area to be 10% of the gland.

While I will be monitored for three years, I am most likely clear of the cancer now. I attribute this apparent good fortune to early detection and prompt action. Without PSA testing, this would not have occurred, as there were no symptoms indicating the possible presence of cancer. It is unknown for how long the cancer had been present or how rapidly it was growing, but without surgical intervention it surely would have continued to grow and eventually spread beyond the gland.



Anonymous

I believe that PSA testing and early detection saved my husband's life and I am counting on it to do the same for my son, since a man with a direct relative with prostate cancer is at significantly increased risk for developing it himself. Until we have a better test, it is important that doctors continue to recommend that all men have a PSA test and that insurance companies continue to pay for it.

Yes, there are side effects from the treatment, but I know that my husband and most other men willingly deal with them in exchange for the opportunity to have additional years of life and the joy that they derive from sharing these much-appreciated years with the ones they love. All of us know someone who has been touched by cancer. Although there is still much work to be done, I am thankful every day for the enormous strides that have been made in combatting this relentless disease. I believe that it is unconscionable to deny any individual the best possible chance to survive and that still remains early detection.

Doris

My husband was in a PSA testing program and was diagnosed with PC in 1992. He had a prostatectomy and since that time, he has been on and off the hormone treatment which has kept his PC under control. He has been dealing with PC for 19 years and is now 89 years old. Without that PSA screening program I feel my husband would not have known he had PC, and would undoubtedly have died years ago.

John

My prostate cancer was only detected by use of the PSA. Digital exam and all other symptoms were negative. . To think I'm incapable of getting a test result, evaluating the alternatives, and making my own decision for action is incredible. I do not want anyone to prevent my son's (and I have three) from getting the testing they need to make their own informed decision. This is life changing decision and should be made my each individual with the best information available.

Rick

Without screening, we will lose more than the 33,000 men predicted to die for this year; without a PSA test, I could have been one of them.

Tracy

My dad was diagnosed with prostate cancer when he was 55 years old. This was discovered by a free PSA screening health fair. He had surgery. Fast forward to age 66 his PSA was elevated then started treatment, a lot of chemo and radiation, he died at the age of 68. We are thankful for the PSA test. I am bothered that there is not more of a push in prostate cancer research. I am thankful for Susan Komen but it's time to raise millions for the men in our lives.

Michael

I am a 57 yr. old man whose PSA readings, along with an abnormal DRA, after being watched for a while, had a biopsy which did confirm Prostate Cancer. I chose external radiation in 2009, and my prostate levels and DRA are good. I feel that this tool, tempered with good reasoning and guidance, is of value and should not be discarded.

Anonymous

The solution is not to stop the imperfect PSA testing...it is to educate physicians how to 1) interpret the results 2) follow up/or not diagnostically in an informed and intelligent manner and 3) respond in a like – and ethical – manner.

The test is not only intrinsically wanting; it is applied in a diverse pt. population and in the case of confirmed CaP, to a tumor and microenvironment of exceptional heterogeneity and dynamic adaptability.

Still, it seems highly inadvisable to not use a tool that saves lives in the hands of intelligent, well informed physicians.

The opinion of a Stage 4 patient.

Ben

My father waited until he had symptoms before he saw a doctor. He was diagnosed with PCa in January and died a horrible, degrading death in July at age 71.

Waiting for symptoms can be suicidal.

Anonymous

Had been getting annual PSAs for ~10 years, starting around age 54. Level stayed flat until late '09 and then started rising. Mid '10 had biopsy which found 3 out of 12

positives, none over 20%, and no spread to other organs. But I have a Gleason of 6-7. Took 6+ months to analyze options, got 2nd and 3rd opinions (including independent tests at different hospital and doctor) and decided to take IMRT radiation (45 treatments spread over 9 weeks ending in mid ~'11).

PSA dropped by 70%. No hormones needed. Most major side effect: no more ejaculation, but sex still enjoyable. Unclear to me if any of this was really necessary as highest PSA (prior to IMRT) was 7.7 (but that was double from prior year).

At age 64, however, it seemed better to proceed now than later when heavier duty treatment (e.g., surgery, hormones) might instead be necessary. Think PSA testing is still good idea, but suggest minimal possible treatment needed to get on with life, rather than jumping at the so-called "gold standard" of irreversible surgery.



Pam

My husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer in January of 2011. If it hadn't been for the PSA test his cancer would not have been diagnosed. He subsequently had robotic surgery and is cancer free. The PSA test saved his life.

Ronald

The age of 65 I went in for a routine physical examination which consists of blood work and physical examination. My PSA numbers at that time were 2.9 considered in the

Normal Range for my age group. My doctor suggested that I have a ultrasound and a biopsy. The biopsy proved positive even though my PSA numbers were very low. I had radiation and seed implants. I am 80 years old and if that was for a routine physical examination and a PSA blood test, I don't think I would be here today.

John

It is true that the PSA test delivers too many 'false positives' and 'false negatives' to qualify it for final decision making. But, it has value as a preliminary indicator for proceeding with more definitive tests. For example, a high PSA but no other symptoms associated with enlarged prostate might be a 'false positive,' but if associated with other symptoms should signal further tests. Particularly, ultra scan with biopsies.

A history of low PSAs followed with a steadily increasing PSA numbers could also be indicative. I agree that final reliance on PSA is not a reasonable position.

I have had two negative biopsies and two TURPs.

Anonymous

THE PSA TEST SAVED MY LIFE. At 63 my PSA began to show a rise, never getting above 2.2. I had a biopsy reluctantly, and showed positive with a Gleason score of 7. I elected to have IGRT/IMRT.

Keith

If I had not been screened I would NOT have known I had a Gleason 8 cancer...and at 48, that's way too young to have that grade of cancer. I was at baseline for 3 years before my PSA jumped to 8 at my annual exam. If I had missed that annual exam and not had my PSA checked I would have gone another year with a Gleason 8, 6 core positive cancer. As it was I had surgery and the margins were positive...so 48 radiation treatments later...now it's gone! I am convinced that having my PSA checked saved me from having more complications or even death if it was undetected.

Dominic

I was diagnosed at age 47 with a Gleason 8. Despite an RP, IMRT, Chemo & ADT my disease is recurrent. If it weren't for a PSA I would likely have bone mets or worse. I have friends like me that too have similar stories so with bone disease. Until there is a better indicator, I strongly believe in PSA testing.

All the best to those fighting this disease. It not only impacts men but their loved ones.

Anonymous

My husband did not get a PSA because his GP said exactly what the article did – he felt it led to unnecessary TX. So, at 65, because his urine stream was so weak, I sent him to MD (different one) thinking benign prostatic hypertrophy. PSA was 60. One month on antibiotic and it was up to 61. Biopsy showed cancer in every sample. If it had been caught earlier, we would have had more options for effective TX. It seems the problem isn't the PSA. The problem is educating practitioners on treatment options after an elevated PSA.

Charles

I was the poster boy for putting off medical screening. I had a physical for an insurance policy at age 60. The blood work revealed PSA 5.1. Ten years prior, the PSA was not detectable. During follow-up, my urologist found a colo-rectal tumor. Chemotherapy, EBRT, and 7 surgeries (including brachytherapy) have brought me to this stage. My five year survival rate for stage 4 colon cancer was 8%.

I am now in my 8th year of survival, in good physically active health with regular monitoring. The PSA test was the first critical step in my successful survival. I should have been looking at annual tests to monitor its development. I feel that all men should have a history of their PSA levels until there is a more accurate test available. Treatment for elevated PSA is another story, and should be carefully managed on an individual basis.

James

I am a 51 year Prostate cancer survivor of 3 weeks now. Good that I had a Primary care doctor that noticed a spike in my PSA. She refereed me to a Urologist and I had a Biopsy. Small amounts of cancer were found. By the time I had my next biopsy a year later my PSA had gone up another 1.96 to 4.96. I had surgery on 19 September 2011 and I'm recovering quite well. PSA testing probably saved my LIFE!

Bruce

In 2008 I was diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer with a NORMAL PSA. It was 3.2, up from 2.0 the previous year- I was 51 years old at the time. No symptoms or cause for alarm and I have taken yearly physicals since the age of 30. Without a PSA test back then I would certainly have passed away by now leaving a young family of 4.

How much is each life worth?

I will turn 55 next week and my oncologist is encouraged about my survival for another 10 years based on my response to my current treatments, hormone therapy, completion a year ago of the Provenge protocol and most certainly the new drugs on the near horizon.

Jeff

I am a 7 year survivor and I hadn't had my PSA taken at my normal annual physical, I would have died within the year. Mine was very aggressive, but due to the screening I am alive and well. It triggered the concern to look further.

Anonymous

My best friend went from a PSA of normal in one year to highly elevated one year later and soon died from a very aggressive form of prostate cancer. Was the prior test a false negative? I don't know; but if it we had a more accurate test it may have saved him. I don't know if this is helpful but I thought I'd tell the story.

Edward

PSA testing saved my life and dictated further testing which revealed aggressive prostate cancer at age 73 which was eventually treated in time with radiation. I am now in remission.

Dean

Because my PSA rose from 2.5 to 4.0 in a five year period, my doctor referred me to a Urologist, who felt I needed a biopsy. Two weeks later I was told I had Prostate Cancer (Gleason 7). At about the same time, my two brothers were also diagnosed with prostate cancer, discovered by a rise in PSA. That was 8 years ago and I am still alive, continuing to get my PSA checked once a year. It is still

Daniel

Were it not for PSA testing, I would not have known that I had prostate cancer. This information led me to support groups Malecare, from whose leaders and other members I learned what treatments were available and recommended, and was directed to the appropriate institutions and physicians for care. I would likely not be alive today were it not for the PSA test.

Until a better method is available, the simply performed PSA test for men in middle-age is vital to their health and well-being, and has the potential, like the mammogram, to save lives. Over-reaction to a positive finding is regrettable and more often than not unnecessary, and easily enough avoided by contacting these dedicated support groups. Knowledge is power.

Ignorance, in matters of health, is not bliss.

John

My prostate cancer never did reveal itself to a DRE; it was only a monitoring of my PSA at regular intervals that resulted in my having a biopsy and a diagnosis of already advance PCa at age 55 in 2006.

As a result of catching it when we did, I am still alive and still reasonably functional going on six years later.

Would I be either of those if we hadn't caught it when we did? It is hard to prove one way or the other, but I can't imagine I'd have felt and done better if we'd waited until it began causing bone pain before we'd discovered it. At least for a while I could enjoy the hope of getting cured. Once it was in the bones, it was clearly not curable. That would have been a terrible shock.

The treatments for prostate cancer are no picnic in the park; they have taken a toll on me. But as treatments improve it will make more and more sense to catch and treat prostate cancer earlier rather than later. I can't imagine a circumstance where living in ignorance about having the disease is better than knowing about it.

David

The PSA test, requested by my General Practitioner, ended my specialists 4 year belief that I had prostatitis, which he was treating with antibiotics, while I suffered. I underwent successful radiation therapy 12 years ago.

Norman

PSA testing helped me find cancer early and I tracked it for years until it spiked. Without the test I would not have known I was in danger. Thank you for PSA. It may not be perfect but neither are mammograms. Why take away the only early warning tool we have today.

Dan

In February of 2003, my PSA doubled from the previous test two years prior. My urologist could find no irregularity in my DRI and I had no other symptoms. We decided to do a biopsy – 12 of 12 cores tested positive for cancer (fortunately Gleason 6)! I was treated with radiation and brachytherapy in the fall of 2003 and today my PSA is undetectable.

I feel that the PSA test SAVED MY LIFE!

Turk

In February of 2003, my PSA doubled from the previous test two years prior. My urologist could find no irregularity in my DRI and I had no other symptoms. We decided to

do a biopsy – 12 of 12 cores tested positive for cancer (fortunately Gleason 6)! I was treated with radiation and brachytherapy in the fall of 2003 and today my PSA is undetectable.

I feel that the PSA test SAVED MY LIFE!

Anonymous

Diagnosed at 47 by my General Practitioner who incorporates PSA testing for all his patients over 40. My increase was only 1.5 over the previous year but my Dr. was cautious and referred me to a urologist who then did a biopsy. Had robotic prostatectomy and now I am cancer free. Would never have thought to ask for a PSA test on my own. It's crazy not to test under 50 – it probably saved my life.

John

I was diagnosed in 2004 at the age of 5 with a Gleason 7 and PSA of 4.1. At that diagnosis my urologist told me that without the PSA, I would have waited until symptoms appeared. That meant I would not have seen him for another decade and then it would have been a matter of trying to see how much longer the medical establishment could keep me alive.

I had a radical prostatectomy in 2004. Seven years later, my PSA is 0.6 and I have decades of life to look forward to.

David

PSA Testing is a vital tool which must be maintained in the fight against prostate cancer. I for one am being treated utilizing "Active Surveillance". It is imperative that I receive PSA testing as well as digital examinations to monitor the activity of my prostate. The PSA is a tool which has guided men in an effort to save lives. Early detection using PSA and digital testing is the front line in treatment and must be continued until a better proven method of monitoring the prostate activity is developed.

Mary

When my husband finally had a PSA test for PCa, it was after having two young docs who said his DRE was fine so no need to have a PSA, and his PSA was 61. If we had waited much longer he would probably not be a PCa survivor today five years post treatment. So much for DRE's being all that are needed.

I am thankful for my husband being here with me today and the doc who thought at the age of 65 he NEEDED a PSA.

Douglas

My PSA was checked regularly. One year my Doctor noted a change and sent me for a biopsy. Surgical removal of the prostate followed with two months. The cancer had just started to escape the prostate but was completely killed by subsequent radiation. There is no doubt in my mind that the regular PSA tests increased my life span and quality of life. As a result of my experience, my brother's prostate cancer was detected and is being treated. The idea that men should not have PSA tests is ludicrous!



Fred

I was 51 years old with NO symptoms when the combination of PSA test and digital rectal exam detected a tumor. I have been cancer-free for 12 years and I believe that the PSA test might have saved my life.

Victoria

I am the wife of a prostate cancer survivor who was treated in 2003 after a series of routine PSA screenings which indicated rapid PSA velocity a biopsy established cancer, well ahead of metastasis. He was treated with brachytherapy and hormone ablation and is, to this day, cancer free.

Recently, at a conference, I met a man and wife whose story is the exact opposite of ours.

This man never had a PSA, but had some difficulty urinating, so booked an appointment with a urologist. The doctor did a rectal exam and found cancer which had metastasized to a dangerous degree—the man had a Gleason of, I believe, 8. Our urologist tells us that, in the bygone days before there was PSA screening, that's how prostate cancer—the dangerous kind—was almost always found, via the DRE, and by then it was often too late.

Somehow the man I met has lived, going from radiation to chemo to palliative treatments, which he is currently on. He met his wife the day after diagnosis. They know that, although these ten years have been a blessing, he is, in essence, under a death sentence. I heard them say the other day, "In our next life, we just hope we meet earlier..." They are brave people: whoever comes next in this fight against cancer deserves the heads-up that PSA screening affords.

Founded in 1998, Malecare Cancer Support is America's leading prostate cancer survivor support and advocacy nonprofit organization. Learn more at www.malecare.org

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Ken

In 2008 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Luckily, my doctor believed in PSA testing and it was part of my check-up. If he did not screen for PSA, I may not be here today. Two cores were cancerous and I had my prostate removed 4 months later. It had not spread to the margins and I consider myself lucky. Three years later...fast forward. I continue to get tests and all have been negative. I don't even want to imagine what may have happened had I not been tested.

Anonymous

In 2006 at the age of 55, I had no symptoms but a rising PSA score. My doctor ordered a biopsy and the results showed 11 out of 20 samples were positive for prostate cancer. I did my research talking to doctors and patients, and I read several books and visited many internet web sites. I was a good candidate for surgery or for radiation therapy. I considered active surveillance for about 5 minutes. All of my tests showed that waiting wasn't an option. My doctor told me I could do nothing and would then have serious health problems, possibly death in 5-7 years. I am alive and cancer free 5 years later thanks to the PSA test.

1 out of 6 men will get prostate cancer. 5 out of 6 won't. The problem is, how else would you know if you are like me, the unlucky one of the six? Why wait for symptoms that tell you it's too late to get rid of the cancer or that you will have difficult and painful times ahead living with the cancer?

Anonymous

I did not get my PSA tested from age 42 to 54. When I was tested and subsequently biopsied, I had stage 3 prostate cancer. I believe if I had gotten tested more regularly I could have stopped the disease in stage 1. I am now subject to taking seriously bad medicine maybe for the rest of my life. I also spent a small fortune on radiation and meds. If I had not ever gotten PSA tests I believe I would soon be in stage 4 and dead in 5 years. A simple blood test 10 years ago would have saved me a lot of grief and maybe extended my life. Not to mention my wallet.

Anonymous

My great grandfather died at age 92 of prostate cancer. He had surgery in his 80's. My father had extra capsular advance stage prostate cancer at age 79. He treated with external beam radiation. That said he continues to have aftereffects and has had to undergo anti-androgen therapy to maintain reasonable control numbers.

I was therefore not surprised at age 54 to have been diagnosed with PCA, due to the year over year increase in my PSA. The biopsy was a year ago this past week and was

positive but showed only limited cancer. I had surgery in January of this year (2011). The pathology report following the surgery moved my stage to T2 finding that the tumor was on both sides of my prostate, and considerably larger than anticipated by the biopsy.

While I am still dealing with issues related to impotence, I recovered continence within six weeks of the surgery.

All things considered and with my family history, I have to believe that the PSA test saved my life and allowed me to avoid the clear fate that awaited me in the future. The results of the PSA test worked for me. Maybe I am in the small group who benefited from the PSA test. It allowed me to be treated at an age when treatment was both practical and effective.

Richard

Without PSA I would not have known I had Cancer. I had a PSA test for the first time in 2001 it was a 8 and led my DR. to do a DRE and he found nodules and sent me to a urologist.

I tested positive for aggressive cancer and had CRYO in 2002. I am still cancer free 9 years later. PSA is not the only test to go by but it is a start and saved my life.

Paul

I strongly support the early and continuing PSA testing for men over age 40 and even earlier with a history of prostate cancer in their immediate family. I did not start PSA testing until about age 50 during which time I had BPH. The PSA level was moderate and relatively constant for 6 years (aged 56-62). However from Feb 08 to Jun 08, a period of 4 months the PSA jumped from 2.67 to 3.99 (an increase of 1.32 points or 49%), precipitating a biopsy which confirmed prostate cancer (at Gleason 4+3=7). Another PSA in Sep 08 revealed a PSA of 6.07 (an further increase of 2.01 or 50% within 3 months).

I did not take the results lightly, suspecting I had an aggressive form of prostate cancer. I was subsequently treated with proton beam therapy. I have had no significant side effects and my current PSA after 2.5 years is 1.01, which I am continuing to monitor. I don't know of the potential for recurrence, but I live for each day and am thankful for the opportunity.

Steven

At 47 years old, I never considered the thought of Prostate Cancer. While undergoing treatment for a urinary tract infection, I had a PSA test done which was understandably high. Since I also had trouble emptying my bladder and frequently got up at night, I gave in and determined to have another PSA test done several months after the infection was gone. It came back at 8.7.

If I had not done this, I would have likely lived with the inconveniences of the symptoms but not followed up with testing. I might also be dead by now! PSA testing saved my life; there's no way around that fact.

David

I am 59. I have been slowly watching my PSA climb for the past 10 years. 2 years ago it was 8.7, and my GP referred me to a Urologist. I had no symptoms at all. I felt fine. I failed to realize the implications, or the importance of what was happening to my body. I never got around to making that appointment.

Last November, I had an issue which required a visit to my GP. It was not related to my soon-to-be-discovered PC; however, it did start a chain reaction of subsequent tests. The blood test revealed a PSA of 64. Needless to say, I got the call from my GP. She asked whether I had seen the urologist 18 months ago (at the time). I said no, I never got around to it. Well, you MUST go immediately! She remarked.

First came the ultrasound, then the CT scan, then the biopsy, and then....."I'm afraid to say that you have PC" from the urologist. Prior to his confirmation of my disease, he was saying that he would operate (the old fashioned open surgery way). Following the biopsy, I had a bone scan, then an MRI.

The bone scan was clear; The MRI revealed that the cancer had begun to spread from one side. This urologist then decided NOT to operate. He was afraid to find that it had spread beyond his ability to operate successfully. His preferred option was then for nuclear/hormone treatment. This revelation pretty-much shattered me, to say the least.

After all, I am bullet-proof! This must be some kind of cruel joke...surely! My obvious collapse of composure in his rooms led him to offer referrals to as many other doctors and oncologists as I needed to help come to terms with what I should do about it. I saw two other surgeons and one oncologist. They all agreed that it was operable. So, I chose one who had the most scalps on his belt, and had my keyhole laparoscopic radicle prostatectomy performed in April of this year (6 months ago today!).

After 2 PSA tests since, my score is 0. Continence is almost normal again. Working on the rehab issues to do with ED is ongoing. To go through this chapter on one's own is a huge load to bear also. But for the support of some really good friends, and my son, I would have struggled much more than I have.

The good thing about all of this is that because of PSA testing, I will have a life without the trauma of a metastasized cancer. Life is different...yes. It can still be good though.

Lars

I was diagnosed 1995 with PSA 58, Gleason 9 and 60 gram gland. 6 months to live!!! We treated with Lupron and when PSA was down to about I had radical surgery. Continued Lupron and added Casodex added. Then, radiation of the prostate bed. Had the

best radiologist and again PSA down to below detectable for about five years. How could I have been able to monitor my PC without PSA tests?



David

Diagnosed in 2004 with a highly aggressive, locally advanced PCa, I have completed about 3 years of ADT, with no return of testosterone after stopping ADT 3 years ago, and underwent a full program of radiation therapy.

The side effects of the hormone deprivation therapy have been Draconian and have significantly damaged virtually every aspect of my quality of life. Other adverse side effects resulted from the radiation therapy. At the time of my diagnosis, little was known about possible ADT syndrome, so I could have not have possibly made an intelligent choice.

I am a health care provider in pediatrics so I had not reviewed adult internal medicine in many years at the time of my diagnosis. On balance, now, I concur with the USPSTF recommendations.

At the very least, asymptomatic men should carefully consider whether they can deal with the likely consequences of getting a screening PSA. We must finally admit that scant evidence exists that, even for relatively aggressive cancers, testing and treatment will likely have minimal effect on overall mortality but are virtually guaranteed to result in adverse effects on a patient's life.

This view would change if, in 5-10 years, we have must more effective and safe targeted therapies, immunotherapies, or other options, but for now, most men should not be encouraged to get PSA screening. Our reach has exceeded our grasp, and we have acted with more zeal than wisdom. It's time to step back and seriously consider the wisdom of routine screening.

Rich

Above normal PSA readings on two separate tests led me to a biopsy which revealed prostate cancer. Without this information, I would not have been able to benefit from early detection and treatment.

Having men screened for prostate cancer is a good idea that is shared by medical professionals for other diseases. People with heart conditions have stress tests and cholesterol screenings. Women have mammograms to test for breast cancer.

The real issue is for men to follow their PSA over time and to stay in touch with their doctor(s) if there are changes, especially a consistent move upward. Those of us in the prostate cancer awareness community advocate a holistic view about detection and treatment of prostate cancer.

One piece of data in time (a single PSA reading) is not enough to paint a picture of prostate health. It needs to be accompanied by a DRE (digital rectal exam) and consultation with a doctor. Avoiding PSA screenings altogether in the name of men's health is really a PSA – positively silly approach.

Anonymous

Since my 40's, my doctors have done an annual PSA check. Three years ago this baseline became valuable (I was 61 then). My PSA started to rise with no indication of an enlarged prostate. After a couple of annual treatments with antibiotic that reduced my PSA. My PSA jumped to a 6 so a 12 sample biopsy was performed. No findings, but a year later PSA went to a 9. A saturation biopsy was performed with one positive rated 6. I now have had 43 radiation treatments.

Without the PSA baseline the cancer could easily be out of my prostate into untreatable areas.

A neighbor never had a PSA. By the time it was discovered that he had prostate cancer, it was in his bone marrow, so now he is dying with untreatable cancer. I have told my brothers that they need to have PSA and Colonoscopy done as prescribed.

Cancer can suck the life out of you quickly.

Kurt

I went in to do a colonoscopy because my father had colon cancer at 50. This was my 3rd one. When I awoke the Doctor told me my colon was fine but I had Prostate Cancer at age 50. I did not know what a PSA test was but the Doctor had done one with the Colon test. 6 months later my prostate was removed robotically. Today I'm cancer free with no side effects.

Rick

The PSA test saved my life. At 47 years old I had no symptoms and no family history. My PSA came back 11.1. The DRE found nothing. I'm health and living after successful surgery with a 0.0 PSA three years later. Without the PSA test I would be on my way to being dead. It is just that simple.

Anonymous

My grandfather and father had PC and I began PSA testing in 1990. The number rose yearly. In Mar 2004 it was 3.2 and in Oct it was 5.7. I had a biopsy which indicated cancer with a Gleason of 3+3. I had a RP done in Jan 2005. The post Gleason was still 3+3 but the pathologist indicated that the cancer had spread to the outer extremity of the prostate but did not break through. **IF I DIDN'T HAVE A PSA EXAM IT WOULD HAVE SPREAD AND I WOULD'NT BE WRITING THIS MESSAGE.**

PSA testing is the only adequate method to determine PC, but on test will not give a definite indication.

The testing must be done over a period of time to determine if it was a fluke or a trend develop in which case further testing would be necessary. The Gleason test would be a good indicator of the growth and location of the PC.

It is impossible to have a study to correctly state the results in general terms. Each case of Prostate Cancer must be diagnosed and treated individually.

Sue

Every time Prostate Cancer is in the news, it is reinforced that it is slow growing, not likely to kill you, can be watched, etc., etc., etc. It angers me and sickens me every time. My husband, was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer at 52 years of age, and was dead at 53 after it spread to lymph nodes, bones (entire skeleton), brain and liver, encroaching on his spinal cord and paralyzing him.

His Prostate Cancer was not slow growing, it was extremely aggressive. It took down a vibrant hard working farmer in the prime of his life. We were told he'd have 15 years easily, and at least 5 years before any chemo or radiation would even need to be considered, but he had 17 months.

Prostate Cancer DOES kill, and when it is aggressive it kills young and middle aged men with families and careers, not just long ago retired men in the twilight of their lives who 'may be killed by something else long before Prostate Cancer will kill them' as is so often touted. He left behind a son in college, a daughter just out on her own and starting her career, a 14 month old granddaughter, and he was the sole driving force behind the family farm that his father started from nothing – not to mention myself, his wife of over 28 years still in shock and left holding the bag.

My husband was only diagnosed by accident, his doctor did 'routine' blood work due to his having some flu like symptoms off & on for about 6 weeks. There were no PC symptoms.

When the doctor called our house the day after Thanksgiving to report the findings our lives were turned upside down never to return, but had the PSA test not been done, who knows how long it would have taken to be discovered, and would the primary cancer have ever been determined? Would he have been able to live long enough to know his only grandchild born just months after his initial diagnosis?

Maybe the PSA test will 'only' save 1 man out of thousands tested. SO WHAT??!! Each and every life lost is precious and meaningful and not to be discounted. The test is simple and not expensive so what is the harm in trying to prevent the horror that our family, and countless others, have had to endure when perhaps it could have been different?

Bill

I was in my mid 40's and changed family doctors. I mentioned my Father had prostate cancer (diagnosed in his mid 80's) and the new doctor said I should have a PSA every year. In my early 50's, my PSA had a pretty good jump even though it was relatively low. We did a needle biopsy and it came back with a lot of pretty aggressive cancer. I had the prostate out in 2000 tumor was "to the margin". About a year and a half later, PSA started shooting up again so we did radiation and then on to hormone deprivation. I did chemo last year. It looks like it is here to stay since my PSA is on the rise again. I was in Vietnam for a year and my cancer has pretty much followed right down the line what the VA says what happens with Agent Orange related prostate cancer.

In my opinion, if I was not getting a yearly PSA test, I would not be writing this today.

Gary

While applying for an insurance policy, I was required to have a PSA test. I was 65 and had never been tested before and my results were 105. My Urologist immediately started me on ADT; 30 days later had a RRP. The pathology returned a 4+5=9 Gleason score, staging of pT3b, NO, MX. The cancer had already escaped the capsule and was in the seminal vesicles. Two months after surgery, I had IMRT, 40 treatments and stayed on ADT for 2 years before I was able to stop that treatment. Only by PSA testing did I find that I required further testing (Biopsy) which resulted with follow-up treatments.

Tri-monthly PSA testing after radiation determined when to end ADT, and the PC has been in remission now for 2 years. Without monitoring PSA (which the level is now starting to creep up) I would not know when to renew my treatments in order to sustain life. Without the original testing, and with no cause to investigate further, there is no doubt; I would be in a final stage of cancer at this time. PSA and DRE exams are the only inexpensive tools men have available. We should be PROMOTING their existence loudly.

Chris

I was diagnosed with Prostate Cancer in 2001 because my primary care physician recognized that my PSA was above the threshold standard (4.0). At age 52, my wife and I appreciated that we had the option of treatment or watchful waiting at that time. The way we saw it then is that it is the patient's choice and that the patient should have the

information about his health status. If we did not have the information about the growing cancer that the PSA alerted us to, then at what point would we know?

Ten years later my primary care physician would be using the digital rectal exam during my annual physical to find a lump.

Personally, as the patient, I would prefer to have the option to intervene SOONER than when the PCP finds a lump because earlier treatment can make a difference. Fortunately, my PSA remains at less than 0.01 today and I continue to use the PSA test every 6 months.

I am actively involved in managing the disease through exercise, diet and meditation and use the PSA to monitor for any change. I recognize that it is not a perfect tool but until a better tool becomes available I think physicians should let the patient decide about using the PSA and they should not make the choice for the patient.

George

I am 64 years old. I had been having annual PSA tests done by my PCP for at least ten years before it went over 4.0 in early 2009. It had jumped from 2.8 to 4.1 in a year, and my doctor suggested that I see a urologist, although she felt that the likelihood of PCa was low. The urologist performed a biopsy, and in May of 2009 I was told that I did have PCa in four of fourteen tested sites, with a Gleason of 3+3.

After doing a LOT of research, I decided to treat my PCa with external beam radiation (IMRT); I was not a good candidate for seed implantation, and I know too many men who have had complications following surgery.

Almost two years later my PSA remains under 1.0, and I have it tested every three months by my urologist. If I hadn't been having annual PSA testing, my PCa wouldn't have been caught at such an early stage, and my prognosis might not have been as good as it is.

Barry

Without PSA or a replacement test it will be a disaster to be in that set of men with rising PSA and aggressive prostate cancer. Personally, because of the old guidelines the blood test results was my first indication of very aggressive cancer. Currently I am quite hopeful of keeping my aggressive cancer at bay with treatment. Without the blood test men with similarly aggressive cancer and rising PSA will have no way to know the jeopardy they are in. How will they know when to come in for treatment? Do not leave my sons on the outs.

Anonymous

When you are first diagnosed with stage IV PC you wonder how long you will live. I withdrew, cried all the time, and couldn't talk to my wife, my family, and my friends. My wife was and is my advocate.....PSA screening can save lives. I cannot believe it would be

on the chopping block. Especially from doctors. PC cuts lives short as it is.....don't take the only tool we have away, please.

David

I was diagnosed 3 years ago at age 56 and only because routine PSA testing showed an increase from 2.6 to 3.8 in 1 year. My biopsy revealed a dangerous Gleason score of 9 (5+4). 3 years after surgery my PSA is 0.02. Only routine PSA testing revealed this aggressive cancer before it could spread.

Anonymous

My PSA went from 10 to 20 in one year. A biopsy showed treatable prostate cancer. I do not think that I would have known this without the PSA testing. What is the alternative as in my case there was no symptoms.

Bruce

Hello and let me say first and foremost, "Thank God for PSA testing." Now my story, I was having difficulty after doing short bursts of any unrelated work tasks around the house. I was around 70 or 71 at the time and my PSA readings were between high 2's and low 3's. I had examinations and found I needed heart surgery involving stents.

After completing this and seemingly on a healthy road to recovery it was discovered through regular PSA testing that my readings were getting higher (low 4's and low 5's) Of course I was in denial. My primary physician sent me to a urologist along with my most recent reading, 5.2 or something like that. My urologist wanted to do a biopsy immediately but due to my recent heart stent implants and being on Plavix and having diabetes, it was determined to be too soon in order to guard against any internal bleeding that might occur.

After a few months, I had the biopsy and I did have prostate cancer as suspected by my urologist. I had the cryotherapy treatment and am now living an almost normal life. Yes I am mostly impotent but that is minor considering I could be dead or suffering very badly now. I am now 75 and very few people can tell unless I inform them of that fact.

Anonymous

PSA testing saved me from much pain and treatment. I had my PSA tested annually for a number of years and when it doubled after a year, my primary care wanted it checked again within 6 months. At that test, it had nearly doubled again so I had a biopsy done and PC was found in 3 cores but not outside of the gland itself. Therefore, after much homework and many discussions with PC survivors, EBD and the implanting of seeds was

the therapy I chose. My PSA is currently under .02 and has been for a while, now. Have experienced some side/after effects that have changed my life style a little. However, without the PSA testing, I would probably not even be writing this. A very minor procedure that can save people's lives would seem to be something that should be available for anyone who wants it.

These fools that want to eliminate the PSA test on men don't seem to have any concept of what the real world is actually all about. I wonder how many of them have actually experienced any real-life situations involving prostate cancer (or any other cancer, for that matter.).

Anonymous

My partner and I had been dating one year when he was diagnosed. He had robotic surgery and we were promised everything would be just fine. Yes, the cancer is gone, but so are his erections and his ability to hold urine. Prostate cancer has emasculated him. It was very hard on our relationship. Because since he couldn't get an erection, he stopped wanting sex. We had to work on that for a long time. Prostate cancer took most of the man out of my man.

Harold

My brother is one year older than me and called to inform me after his PSA was done that he had PC. He was 58 at the time. With that stunning information I ran my PSA and was much worse than him. Since I have surgery and radiation and hormone ablation. My Dr. wasn't testing PSA and if it weren't for my brothers' test I would be deceased by now. To say this test isn't effective is wrong. The real problem is mistreatment and over treatment by a medical establishment that knows little about the appropriate protocol

Mare

My husband died this past Dec of Advanced Prostate Cancer, his age a few months past 58, he was diagnosed at 51 the end of 2003 only because I forced him to get a checkup because we were moving to Alaska in the Bush. His PSA was 15 when he died his PSA was 784. He had radical prostatectomy, non-nerve sparing, a life without sex, but a life for another 7 years. He was in two trial studies, had the best doctors. If he had gone sooner for a checkup, perhaps he would be here today. I'm an advocate for early testing... I miss my husband very much.

Gary

In a routine PSA test six years ago when I was 63, followed by a biopsy, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. My wife and I were more than a little worried. I contacted

several centers for surgery, and investigated other options...finally settling on robotic prostatectomy. The surgery was successful, negative margins. I went through several months of therapy for incontinence and about three years of ED treatment. All is pretty much "normal" now, except for not having ejaculations.

I really don't know how aggressive my cancer was, but living with it would probably have been very stressful. I think we are both very relieved the cancer was detected and removed. Continued PSA tests are negative. Hooray for that!!

Lynn

PSA testing saved my life. A routine insurance physical detected a high PSA. A visit to a urologist followed. A biopsy was done and a fast growing cancer was found. Robotic surgery was done and the prostate gland was removed. Over four years later I am still around being the best husband and father I can be.

Jeff

When my dad died of cancer, the post mortem revealed that his lungs, liver and prostate were heavily involved with cancer growths. Although prostate cancer usually progresses to the bones, there is no mention of bone cancer in the write-up, but this occurred around 20 years ago, and I don't know if they were even looking for that.

It is quite likely that the cancer began with the prostate and metastasized to the other organs. So, when my PSA numbers began to increase, I started having biopsies. They were negative until all of a sudden, at a six month interval, they weren't, and showed a Gleason score of between 6 or 7. My brother is nine years younger, and his proctologist keeps checking him regularly.

How else will he know whether his prostate gland begins to go cancerous? The speed with which mine developed was alarming, and I'm sure that the seed implants plus radiation plus hormone treatments I received have saved my life. Blocking regular PSA testing is irrational and is a measure of the negative impact that the insurance companies are trying to exert on our lives to our own detriment.

Steve

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 53. By the time it was discovered by a digital exam, it has spread beyond the prostate. Had I followed the guideline of testing PSA at age 50, I might not still be dealing with the cancer because the treatments might have put it into remission.

There was no prostate cancer in my family history, which some would say is a reason not to have a PSA test. My opinion is that they are wrong!"



Bill

When I retired from the Air Force, the VA Hospital performed a PSA test; the results were a little high for my age of 39. When I saw a AF doctor on my exit physical, he said it was not an issue. At 40, I had some other health issues; I requested a complete physical to include a PSA (I asked for it). It came back higher than previous, 8.9. I was sent to a specialist, took medications for 30 days to see if it was in infection. PSA was at 9.0 afterwards. After a biopsy, it was cancer. I elected for the removal of the prostate, which happened two months later and the cancer had broken the outer barrier of the prostate. If not for the PSA test, the cancer would have gone undetected until it was too late. I had no other indicators that there were any problems. It was also because of PSA testing that five years later the cancer was caught in its early stage.

I am a firm believer in the PSA testing and recommend that men get it performed early to start a baseline.

Tim

My family physician started PSA testing when I was 40, as part of typical blood work for my blood pressure prescriptions. 3 years back the number went over 4, and they got concerned. Sent me off to urologist for further analysis, and I agreed to biopsy being best option for answers. 12 samples and nothing found. Now, 3yrs later, PSA testing came back with number over 8.

Back to urologist, and no symptoms to work with. So, another biopsy was agreed as the choice to find out if anything was going on. This time, 1 sample has come back positive. Gleason score is 6. I'm glad they caught this early, as we are not aware of there being a family history or not (my father passed away at age 48 from heart disease, and prostate cancer was not even on the radar with him). I am going with the surgical removal, and expecting they will get it all. I turn 47 in December, and was pleased to have options.

I was told that we could do nothing today, and I probably wouldn't have symptoms for at least another 10yrs. However, after 10yrs, the situation would likely have become more advanced and have different treatment options. Being the type who prefers to deal with situations before they become difficult, I'm much more comfortable taking care of it today.

After the first biopsy 3yrs ago, I was a bit skeptical about PSA testing (went through the process and nothing was found – well, that wasn't fun at all).

I went through the second round 3yrs later, because I wanted to do what I could be around for my wife and family. Having now found the cancer with the second round, I have revised my opinion and is a supporter of PSA testing. Sure, there are other things that can contribute to a rising PSA and prostate cancer is usually slow growing. But, I'd rather be inconvenienced and take the available tests, rather than ignore it. If I was 20yrs older, I'm sure I would see the situation differently. Until there is a better option to replace PSA testing, I say it is saving lives (especially in the "under 59?" demographic)."

Paul

I have been having annual PSA tests as part of annual checkups pretty much ever since the test became available (I am now 72). The results were always normal (below 1.0) until 2008, when the reading was about 2.5. The sudden change caused my doctor to recommend a biopsy, which showed an early-stage prostate cancer, not detectable by a digital exam.

After due research, I chose to monitor the progress of the cancer. When the next reading came in at 3.3, I decided treatment was indicated. Again I did my research, and consulted with a urologist and a radiation oncologist as well as my primary care physician. Taking all the factors into account, I opted for external beam radiation therapy in the summer of 2009.

Thanks to state-of-the-art equipment at my local hospital, and an excellent team of physicians and technicians, I had absolutely no side effects from the treatment. My PSA is

now below 1.0 again, and I have no reason to believe that the cancer will cause me any problems in what remains of my life.

I firmly believe that I am healthier now, and have a longer life expectancy, than I would have been without early detection and treatment of the cancer, thanks to the PSA test. If I had waited for the cancer to be detectable by a digital exam, it might well have been too late to eradicate it.

Having read the news stories about the recent commission report recommending against regular PSA screening (but not the report itself), I suggest that the problem to be addressed is not giving men the information the PSA test provides, but how they deal with that information. Certainly nobody should immediately submit to surgery or radiation on the first indication of an elevated PSA. I would say one should even wait for a biopsy until after a second PSA reading three or more months after the initial alarm.

Doctors should make it clear to patients that prostate cancers grow slowly, and there is plenty of time to decide on the best course of action. If treatment is indicated, doctors should fully explain the entire range of options and the pros and cons, the risks and benefits, of each. And patients should make their final decision about treatment in consultation with a physician who has no financial stake in the choice. But denying men the information available from an easy, reliable test because of fears about how they might use that information is not a sensible or humane solution.

Anonymous

Prostate cancer is readily curable when detected early. Without the early warning PSA testing provides, my low-risk prostate cancer might have easily progressed beyond cure-certain levels. Typically, prostate cancer symptoms are not apparent during the early phases. My annual and semi-annual physicals offered insights that guided my choices on medication, additional testing, cancer treatments, diet exercise, etc.

New tests now in development may soon replace existing PSA exams, they promise improved accuracy with far fewer false positives. Until the medical community approves and adopts these new testing entries, the now common PSA and DRE testing methods should always be employed.

Robert

I had been having my blood tests done as part of my being in the Air Force Reserve. As part of the normal blood work base on my age the Doctor also ordered a PSA Test. When it came back my PSA was 15. The Doctor called me in and recommended I see a Urologist right away. After a number of other tests he told me I HAD PROSTATE CANCER, and it still might be contained in the Prostate. I had the surgery to remove my Prostate, and for four and a half years the PSA was Zero.

Then the number started to rise. By 2001 it had risen to TEN, when the Doctor recommended I have salvage radiation. This did knock down the PSA number, but again

started to rise. About Four years ago I started on Lupron, and this had kept the PSA below one.

I had no symptoms prior to the first PSA test. If the Doctor had not ordered the PSA test I most likely would either be dead by now or in close to death and in a lot of pain. I thank God that my Doctor ordered the test.

Sharon

My husband was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer after his first PSA test at age 53. He had only a few vague symptoms. Early testing to establish a baseline and then regular testing after might have allowed us to discover the cancer while it was still in a curable stage.

While not foolproof, the inexpensive PSA test is a tool that would have allowed us to get more information and make informed decisions. There should be very few men in this day and age diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer. ”

William

I was diagnosed on April 4, 1999 following a DRE DX was lumps on both sides of the gland, then PSA was 16.7, then Biopsy showed cancer with a Gleason of 7 & Grade T3.

Do to personal reasons I waited until March of 2000 to start treatment. At which time my PSA had increased to 23.X, due to a bout of Bladder infection. Treatment was 3D-EBRT at 78 grays plus Lupron injections for 1 year I have since monitored with PSA only... 1st recurrence, after approx. 5 years, I treated with 6 month of Eligard ... 2nd recurrence, after approx. 3 years, I treated with 6 months of Eligard plus 30 days of Casodex ... 3rd recurrence, after approx. 2 years, I treated with 6 months of Eligard plus 6 months of Casodex ..

That brings me up to date, Survivor of 12 years!! Impotent during Hormone treatment but recovered after the first 2 bouts and don't know about current recovery due to advanced age (not Cancer) No incontinence at any time... I neglected to state my age at diagnosis was 63, currently 75...

My Opinion, sequence of diagnosing should be: Repeated change in DRE, then PSA test, then Biopsy, Then discussion (in Depth, especially about side effects) with your Dr., then Treatment of YOUR choice... Research shows very little difference in the outcome ... If I had it to do over, I probably would have stayed on Hormones for a longer period of 2 years.

Michael

PSA testing alerted my physician to possible prostate cancer problems. The urologist I was referred to a urologist, who did a biopsy. The biopsy indicated a small number of malignant cells. Even so, I opted for surgery to remove the prostate. Even though I acted in a timely manner, the pathology report determined that the cancer was breaking through the capsule. Surgical margins were negative, however. I was 53 years old at the time of surgery with no physical indication of prostate cancer.

This was almost 10 years ago. My PSA checks since then have not been detectable. I think regular PSA tests saved my life and saved me from a painful death. But for the regular PSA testing, the cancer would have escaped the prostate and spread before it could have been detected by digital rectal exam.

Dealing with surgery and struggling with incontinence and erectile function issues has been a struggle, but nothing compared to being diagnosed with advanced metastasized prostate cancer.

It would be irresponsible and downright stupid to NOT monitor PSA beginning at age 50, age 40 where there is a family history of prostate cancer. Regular PSA testing and biopsy where indicated can determine whether prostate cancer is present. This is information that empowers the patient.

What the medical community needs to develop to help that patient is a way to determine whether the cancer is a small tumor that is slow growing and not an immediate health risk, or a cancer that is aggressive and is going to progress quickly outside the prostate capsule and become advance prostate cancer.

Paul

I had a routine physical examination and because of a PSA test I was told to see a Urologist. Who because of this test did a biopsy and had a stage D prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is painless until it gets so bad. I have now survived 20 years of life due to PSA testing.

Christopher

Test, test, test!

PSA tests revealed an escalating score over a period of several months. Accordingly, a biopsy was conducted indicated a Gleason score of 8 — very aggressive. Surgery and hormone therapy followed. PSA has been undetectable since surgery over a year ago. Without the PSA testing, I would never have known about the cancer until too late.

I can't recommend testing enough.



Anonymous

PSA testing quite clearly has saved my husband's life or at least saved him from an earlier unnecessary death. At the age of 44 he was given a PSA test by a GP as part of a general screening. His PSA was already at 4.0, after following it for the next 2 years and watching it rise and raise it ultimately went to 21 at which point he underwent a biopsy and was given the diagnosis of Stage III PCa, with a Gleason score of 10 (the highest score possible for aggressiveness).

During the 2 years of regular PSA screening he was told on many occasions that men his age does not get PCa and that it was probably not cancer. At the time of diagnosis and by some stroke of luck his cancer had not yet spread to his bones or lymph nodes but had already moved outside the prostate itself.

I am certain that if he had not had the PSA test at 44 and waited until the “usual” age of 50 they would have found that the cancer had already spread to his bones and other tissues, making his prognosis extremely poor. He has now had the ability to undergo treatment and fight the cancer which in his case is very aggressive and would have surely taken his life within a couple of years if he had not known of it and therefore not undergone any treatment.

Mike

My PSA was gradually increasing in my late 50's and finally hit 5.0. My doctor ordered a “free” PSA test which indicated cancer. My Urologist was reluctant to do a biopsy with just the PSA data, but when confronted with the “free” PSA data went ahead and did it. Turns out I had cancer in both lobes with a Gleason of 6. I elected to have a radical prostatectomy as the prediction was for the cancer to spread outside the prostate within the next 3 years.

I am six months post-surgery and my PSA is undetectable. I feel great. And my continence is much BETTER than before surgery. Prior to surgery I would have the urge to urinate every hour. Now it is about every 4 hours. Also, I can sleep thru the night without the need to get up. My potency is gradually returning to normal. Without the PSA test, and the “free” PSA test, I would be looking at years of misery.

Anonymous

I am a 23 year survivor of PCa. I was detected through a DRE because the PSA test was not yet used as a detection method; rather it was used as a diagnostic tool to track the activity of Prostate cells after a failed prostatectomy. At that task, it worked (and still works) very well.

It seems to me that all the recommendations of the Task Force (which I have read has no Urologist, no Radiologist, nor Oncologist on board) are based on failure to “save lives”; that there are too many levels of PCa for the test to be effective. But in order to be adjudged, the patient must first know the level and therefore have undergone a test to know where to start. The earlier the test in both the patient’s age and stage of (IF) PCa, the more likely a good diagnosis is.

The PSA test serves essentially the same function as a Smoke Alarm. Something is not normal. The diagnosis is to be based on the physician’s further investigation. So, we have a tool—imperfect, but useable. What needs be done is to develop a better tool—now being researched intensively—and better use of the tool that we have.

Joe

From my 40's on I had a physical every year. When I was 59 I changed my primary care doctor. The new doctor asked if I had ever had a PSA test. I said no. He did the PSA test along with a thorough digital exam. PSA came back at 5.4. He referred me to a urologist who recommended a biopsy. It came back positive, I was treated and remained cancer free for 10 years. PSA starting rising again and I am now on hormone therapy. I am sure that if I had PSA testing done from the time I was 40, the cancer would have been caught much earlier, and I could have had a better long term result.

Anonymous

My first PSA was 4.45 in 1993 over the years it went as low as 2.5 and as high as 5.5 in 1998 I had a biopsy which showed no cancer but had pin cells in some samples. The biopsy was repeated in Dec 98 and pc was detected. After a radical in February 1999 my PSA began to rise and I went on hormone therapy, which I am still on. The digital rectal never showed the pc.

Anonymous

While it's true that PSA screening when we can't tell how a cancer will progress is currently resulting in treatments that are sometimes unnecessary, the alternative is that if people aren't screened, they have no way of knowing they have cancer until it's usually too late. Screening is the smarter choice – now we need to put our research efforts into being able to determine when cancers will grow and when they won't. Side effects from my prostate cancer treatment are sometime inconvenient, but getting a cancer diagnosis when it's beyond treatment would be much worse. As a result of PSA screening, I'm a cancer survivor, not a cancer victim.

Ed

Due to a year over year significant rise in my PSA score (3.4 to 7.0) I was advised to have a 12 shot biopsy, which showed only one cancer result (.05%). Given my family history of prostate cancer –Father died of it, and two younger brothers diagnosed in late 50s/60s–I opted to have my prostate removed despite the option of watchful waiting. Good thing, the post op pathology report indicated that my prostate was riddled with cancer and had spread beyond the capsule–but fortunately not beyond the margins of the surgery. The PSA test is not perfect, but until something better comes along it should be made available through medical coverage programs. Follow-up PSA screenings are important too!!

Richard

As a healthy 53 year old the PSA test saved my life. After biopsy confirmed cancer with a Gleason score of 9, I had robotic surgery. The cancer was stage 3 having escaped the prostate but all margins were clear. Now 2 years later I have no ongoing issues related to the surgery. My mom, sister, two daughters, four grandchildren and my partner are all very grateful that I had the test that saved my life. Without the PSA test my life would be ending soon.

Rick

Because of my family history, PSA testing caught my cancer very early and gave me many options for treatment. If PSA testing is discontinued for most men people will die because of that decision. That's the bottom line.

Dean

PSA testing done 19 months ago saved my life!!!! March of 2010 I found out I have a PSA reading of 8.22, after this I had a digital exam which indicated I had prostate cancer a biopsy was completed locating where the cancer was. Fortunately it was contained within my prostate and not outside the margins. I had surgery on June of. It is now October, 2011 and I remain in good health followed by my Doctor monitoring my status.

According to my surgeon they got all the cancer and I remain cancer free. Had it not been for the PSA I had done during a routine physical as a volunteer Fireman I would had never known there was anything wrong and the cancer would have gone undetected.

Anonymous

My husband had few medical problems so rarely saw a physician. The family practice physician managed to do a complete physical on him including his first PSA test in 2005 when he turned 67. Somehow the result [7.0] and its importance were not communicated to my husband.

The family practice physician died shortly after and years went by until he was told to see another family practice physician because of high blood pressure in 2009. I had been fussing with him for years about what I was hearing in the bathroom in the middle of the night to no avail. The second complete physical included a PSA test. This doctor refused to be ignored. The PSA was 40.5 and further testing was scheduled.

The prostate cancer had metastasized to the retro-peritoneal periotic lymph glands. The local urologist and medical oncologist agreed that surgery and radiation were no longer possible and put him on Casodex and Lupron.

We traced back his medical records and found the first PSA results and were devastated to learn that he could have been treated for a cure in 2005. Instead, the death of the doctor will cause the death of my husband sooner and possibly more painful. He continues to teach and is working on his "bucket list", writing novels furiously. By the end

of 2010 the PSA was rising again. Right now we are enjoying a respite with the Casodex withdrawal response. But it is hard to plan anything, not knowing how long the ""good"" time will be, knowing the ""bad"" time is surely coming.

We worry about our son whose maternal grandfather died of prostate cancer before our son's college graduation with honors and maternal uncle found his prostate cancer early enough for seed radiation therapy. At 40, he hasn't had a PSA test yet. Will this new ruling send him down the same road as his father?

Don

I was diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer shortly before my 70th birthday. I had radical surgery that did not get it all. The cancer was outside the prostate necessitating that I surgically become incontinent and impotent. My prostate cancer is in my lymph nodes. I am now 2.5 years into hormone therapy to keep it at bay.

Unfortunately this therapy does not work forever. Statistically I have less than 3 years to live. Today I am very active, creative and productive. It's discouraging to expect it could end that soon.

For more than 20 years I was so healthy that I failed to replace my primary care physician who retired. During those years I went to 2 or 3 specialists briefly but none of them suggested I get a PSA or DRE. I never had the typical symptoms that precede a diagnosis. My first PSA test was not accompanied by a DRE but 4 months later it was and the doctor sent me immediately to a urologist.

Had I retained a primary care physician or had any of the specialists suggested testing my future would look a whole lot better. I am now 73. My father died at 83 and my mother died at 99. Routine PSA and DRE testing no doubt would have resulted in early detection and a probable surgical cure. Instead I have a horribly painful death to look forward to. PSA testing is very simple and should be part of routine examinations. The problem today is not failure of the test but inappropriate follow-up after positive results.

I have an older brother whose prostate cancer was discovered in routine examination by his primary care doctor shortly before mine was discovered. He was in the early stages and is in watchful waiting, and his PSA is on the decline. Not only is his prognosis better than mine, his life quality is much better. I may never reach the age he has already attained.

PSA testing is a MUST. Wise follow-up is even more of a MUST.

Anonymous

My husband was 49 upon diagnosis, and only because of another issue did his primary send him to a urologist who did a PSA. His PSA was 69.5 and cancer went undetected even though his primary did digital rectal exams every year for 5 years! My father in law just died of prostate cancer at 95....but either had it and didn't tell anyone or was never tested. Had he been tested or had we known.....my husband may have had a

PSA a lot sooner. His final Gleason was 9/10. He had radical surgery, numbers up, 45 days of radiation, and Lupron. It's almost 5 years and his numbers have just started to go up again. I thank God for these last 5 years. And I'm hoping for advances that will help manage him for the future. We are very realistic.

I will make sure that my son has a PSA at 25 and every year thereafter. To recommend foregoing PSA testing is about money, not treatment or diagnosis. The government is willing to let people like my husband die or die a lot sooner by recommending they NOT have a PSA. Like everything else, the course of treatment will be determined by the patient. Had my father in law had his PSA or shared it, my husband's outlook and life would probably have been a lot different. My son now has a chance to overcome the odds.

If for no other reason, PSA is needed for your sons. So they know, so they can be diagnosed early. Everyone knows that early diagnosis of any type of cancer is essential if you are looking for a cure. I want all of our husbands and sons to have that opportunity."

Robert

In August 2007 I was notified by my physician that my annual check- up showed that my PSA had risen from 3.2 to 4.2. The digital probe indicated no abnormalities. I was advised to go to my urologist and have a biopsy. I put off the biopsy for 30 days due to pressing work. In the meantime a second urologist recommended a repeat PSA in six months.

After another call from my primary urologist urging me to do the biopsy, we completed a 12 point biopsy of the prostate in late September 2007. One week later I got the call that biopsy was positive in 6 samples- mostly right side concentrated toward apex. Two samples were 80% cancerous tissue. My urologist informed me that I had an ""aggressive"" cancer.

Over the next 6 weeks I met with 8 urologists, surgeons and oncologists to determine best path. Every doctor had a chance to view the slides but not until my last doctor did he carefully review, along with his expert team, the slides, the locations, etc. As we were leaving his office he stated to me "do not take too long to decide". When I asked him why he stated "You are one of those aggressive cases, without treatment you may be dead in a couple of months."

We operated on 23 November 2007. Open RRP. A week later my surgeon called and told me that we were lucky and we got it all. While I suffered with 100% incontinence for one year, the male sling has put me back to nearly fully continent. I had ED issues before surgery and continue to work that problem.

I chose the most experienced surgeon I could find. He was also the surgeon who told me not to wait.

I am absolutely convinced that I would be a statistic today if not for the two doctors who understood and believed in PSA acceleration and aggressive cancer sign. My Gleason was only 7 (4+3), but the other factors provided strong evidence."

Steven

I'm pretty sure that with a Gleason 9, 6 out of 6 cores positive, and post pathology showing 30% to 40% of the prostate being malignant, that I would have been considered to have potentially lethally prostate cancer. I was relatively young at 58 in 1995 and considered as, healthy. I underwent surgery and things worsened because post pathology showed extra capsular penetration and positive surgical margins. I followed surgery with radiation.

Without the PSA test, biopsy, and treatment, the odds are extremely high that I would not now be alive at 74 and would have suffered from bone pain along the way. Yes, I have had some of the side effects of surgery and radiation. These are relatively mild and controllable. Death is not.

David

My father died of prostate cancer in 1958 at age 58. PSA's, not available then, starting at 40 years of age would probably have saved his life. I started getting PSA's at 40. At age 57 my PSA came back with a reading of 13.7 (the previous year, it was 4.0). Biopsy showed cancer with some segments showing a Gleason score of 8.0 (very high activity). My prostate was removed in July 2000 and I am now at a PSA reading of 0.0. I am now an 11 year cancer survivor.

David

I am a prostate cancer survivor. Without routine PSA testing I would now be in agony waiting to die. I missed checking one year and an aggressive form of cancer almost got ahead of me. I got treatment just before the cancer broke out of the prostate. Add my voice to those calling for increased PSA testing. It is as prevalent as breast cancer and can easily be treated if caught in time.

Anonymous

In summer of 08 my PSA was 2.1. In summer of 09 it was 21. Then a month later it was 28.

So in Oct I had my prostate taken out. The cancer had spread to lymph nodes.

My cancer was graded 8-9 on the Gleason score.

Because the cancer was very aggressive I feel if I didn't have the PSA test the cancer would have spread thru out my body by now."



Mike

I'm a 59 year old white male. In 2008, after months of small and usually non-descript symptoms, I went to the doctor for a checkup. My symptoms were: low grade fever several times a week, feeling flu-ish i.e. bone and muscle aches, no morning erections, very weak stream, and dis-charge of small amounts of semen after urinating. The first doctor I saw passed it off as nothing, possibly from the use of anti-histamines' knew that there was something wrong. I went back to the doctor again 2 weeks later, and insisted on a PSA. The first doctor would not give me one, even though I requested it. She stated that it is only required one time a year, and I was not covered for 2 tests per year.

But on the second visit, I saw a different doctor, and she did the test as I requested. Two days later, I was called to come in for a biopsy; my PSA had tripled in a little over 7 months. I was diagnosed with a small cell, high grade, grade 8 cancer. A very rapidly growing cancer. Had I not seen the second dry, and had the PSA, I would have had less than a year left. That was 3 years ago. I am now cancer free, and am able to perform as a man. I pray that all men get checked.

Lawrence

I have a family history (father-62 and two of his cousins-70's) of men who died from prostate cancer before PSA screening was available. So even though I was very

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“tuned in” PCa, e.g. reading scientific American articles dating back to the late 90's, it was a rapidly accelerating PSA (from .5 to 2.5 in one year) that triggered further investigation with a biopsy (digital recital exam detected nothing of course) that verified Cancer. My prostate was removed 4 years ago and now CONFIRMING PSA tests have shown so far so good.

Anonymous

My PSA test in April, 2005 at age 50 saved my life. It spiked from 3.5 to 4.5 in 1 year. My biopsy confirmed I had an aggressive type of Prostate cancer with a Gleason score of 7(4+3).

I had an open radical prostatectomy at Memorial Sloan Kettering and it was discovered that the cancer spread outside the capsule. However, my surgical margins and lymph nodes were clear.

If I had not taken that PSA test, the cancer would have metastasized to my bones and possibly other organs in my body.

As an active member of a local Prostate Cancer support group, I have seen firsthand the tremendous value of the PSA test. Several of our members passed away as a result of not taking the PSA or being misdiagnosed!

Walter

3 years ago, my PCP told me that the PSA test (0.9) and the digital exam were normal; however my enzyme level was elevated. I decided to see a Urologist for a second opinion. The Urologist told me the enzyme level was normal and that he wanted to do a digital exam. I agreed and he found a firm spot. He suggested that a biopsy be done; it was subsequently done the same day. Of the 16 samples, 1 came back positive for Prostate Cancer.

On the next visit, we had discussed my options and his recommendations. I opted for robotic surgery. When the pathology report was completed, it was determined that my prostate was 10% infected with Cancer. Considering the inconveniences that I have to deal with on a daily basis, I hope to be around for many more years to enjoy my grandchildren.

I have been cancer free for 3 years, and I don't regret the decision that I made at that time. I urge ALL men to get tested and checked, regardless how imperfect the PSA test is. It is better than going through the pain and agony of the disease.

Carl

I feel that even if there are problems pre-treatment, after external beam radiation the number accuracy wasn't an issue, it was a question of whether the number went down. There is accuracy there.

Jim

The PSA test saved my life.

I had a complete physical when I was 50 years old. No PSA was done. The next total physical was done 9 years later with a PSA done. It showed it to be 34!

Without the test results I surely would be dead by now. A Gleason 8 was found and the appropriate therapies were done.

I am continuing therapy and am holding the beast somewhat at bay almost 10 years later.

Robert

2 years ago, normal DRE, PSA 6.4 and rising, Proscar study participant, biopsy with 2 positive cores out of 12, Proton Beam Radiotherapy and PSA now 0.38. Very aggressive cancer detected and treated thanks to PSA test that would have otherwise gone undiagnosed and untreated. I'm only 74 and were it not for regular PSA testing I would be looking at metastases in the near future where now I have a life to live cancer free with my wife, children and grandchildren. The patient and their physician should be the deciding parties on testing.

Anonymous

My rising PSA was ignored and I first learned I had prostate cancer AFTER I discovered I had bone mets. This was a case of medical malpractice and it went to trial. The merits of the case were substantiated in court. But that fact is irrelevant. What matters are that the treatments I have had to undergo since then have been grim and life threatening. Had the treatments begun earlier the cancer may have been prevented from migrating to the bones.

Since my bones are breeding cancer cells I am at risk for castration resistant cancer developing earlier. Furthermore had the treatments begun when the PSA was rising I would not be at risk for necrosis of the jaw caused by Zometa. Had treatments begun earlier I would not have had to hear that I had 6 months to two years to live (8 years ago). Had treatments begun earlier my blood would not have been compromised. Had treatments begun earlier the insurance company may have had to spend less than 429,000 dollars and the hospital would not pay a large malpractice claim subsequent to sloppy record keeping.

I don't argue with the experts that early PSA tests lead to unnecessary treatments and harm. But this problem has more to do with overly aggressive oncologists, urologists, radiation oncologists, and surgeons and scared ignorant patients. Our fear of death and the Docs need for a plentiful supply of patients have made for a perfect storm.

Jerry

I believe that PSA testing saved my life, 16 years ago and thank my urologist for the tests and the radical prostatectomy that followed. If some doctors are overly pushing for treatment that should not be done, shame on them. But to claim PSA's are not saving lives, that's wrong and the media should be presenting a balanced story not a scary headline that makes news but could be killing some men.

Jim

My GP started PSA and DRE tests when I was 70. Two years later my PSA jumped from 3 to 3.7 in two months but my DRE was normal. I was biopsied, cancer was discovered and I had a Gleason score of 6 and then had Brachytherapy. My PSA reached 15 27 months later and I was diagnosed with prostate cancer metastatic to the lymph nodes and I've been on Intermittent hormone therapy ever since. It looks like I have an aggressive cancer and without PSA testing it would have spread much faster and I would probably be dead instead of living a reasonably normal life. PSA testing has prolonged my life significantly."

Anonymous

Because of my father and younger brother had prostate cancer my urologist recommended that I have a PSA test semiannually. In succeeding tests in 1998-1999 my PSA scores were .4, then .6 and then 1.1 so he recommended a sextant biopsy. One pick showed cancer. I underwent brachytherapy. Without the PSA tests my prostate cancer might have gone undetected for years. Who knows what the consequences might have been!

Mark

I was screened when the testing threshold was 4.0. My cancer was aggressive but threw off very little PSA.
Would have been better off with a testing threshold of 2.5
By time my PSA was up to 6 biopsy showed 8 out of 10 cores positive with Gleason of 8.

Joe

I was diagnosed at age 47. When I was 45 I had a prostate infection and went on some antibiotics. At that time my doctor decided to do a PSA test. The level was 1.7. He decided that going forward we should test just to keep track of the number. At age 46 the number went to 2.2 and at age 47 it jumped again to 2.9. Because of the upward trend he recommended I go see a urologist. We talked about the numbers and

decided that it would be a good idea to do a biopsy to level set. We really did not expect to find anything based on the PSA and DRE.

Well one of the cores that biopsied was slightly positive. We discussed everything from watching and waiting, to radiation, to surgery. I knew that it would drive me crazy doing watching and waiting and opted for surgery.

While only one core was slightly positive, over 35% of my gland was cancerous but it was contained. I cannot even imagine what might have happened if I waited till I was 50. So far, my follow-ups have been very good. Yes there are the side effects that you deal with but you learn to live with them.

If I am going out to play golf in the morning, I will have decaf coffee instead, or wait until we make the turn. Over time you learn what your body can and can't handle, and if you are diligent about your Kegel exercises, you recover quickly. I struggled the first few weeks, but within a month I was back to work, bowling, doing just about everything I did before the surgery. I would rather the side effects, then finding out at age 50 and possibly not having as many options available. Since that time I have told anyone willing to listen about what happened to me and have recommended to them that even if they are not 50, go get a baseline test done, so that if your doctor wants to wait till 50 to start routine testing, at least they have something to compare it to.

Anonymous

At age 48 I had 3Tc PC. Although my first doctor took the PSA test at age 45 and I had 3.4 he did nothing. At 48 my PSA was still 3.4 but a biopsy confirmed PC. The color flow Doppler confirmed stage 3tc. So if all I was counting on was the PSA – I'd be dead because it did not move. I my urologist why if PC is so curable then why do 30k men a year die? He asked me this; "What do you call the doctor that graduated the top of the class?" I said I do not know. He said, "A doctor." He said, "What do you call the doctor that graduated at the bottom of the class?" I said I suppose a doctor. He said, "Right and the point is that many men just see the word doctor and think they are all the same and they are not."

I took this to mean that we need to seek out the best doctors when we are on the life/death line. So to me I'd say it wasn't so much the PSA test because my first dumb doctor missed it and let it move up the stages and when the symptom worsened and I made it to other doctors the same PSA number – but they found cancer with better technology such as color flow Doppler ultrasound. Final words: did the PSA test save me – probably not it was that I had great doctors

Anonymous

On Jan.12 2011 I underwent a prostate biopsy. No big deal I thought. ME, prostate cancer, huh that's a laugh. On March 17, 2011 I was diagnosed with PC. I'm not laughing anymore. I had a PSA of 5.36 and a Gleason score of 7. I cried for 2 months and just

wanted to die and get it over with. May 9, 2011, underwent a RP. Spent 2 weeks in the hospital, 1 week home, then 2 more weeks in the hospital with a UTI and Gout. Came home and suffered for 3 months with diaper rash, incontinence, impotency, catheter tube and just general weakness from surgery .I just wanted to die. It has been 5 months now and undergoing radiation treatment, (all the cancer was not removed) I feel much better physically (except the incontinence part) but I have been told at best only 10 more years. I am being treated for major depression and always will be. PLEASE ,PLEASE get your PSA checked and the biopsy is a piece of cake. I least you will put your mind at ease, hopefully. P.S. I am a 57 year old male and married.



Michael

At age 48 I asked the doctor to test me due to family history. My PSA was elevated and two weeks later it was more elevated. Shortly after I had a biopsy to confirm cancer and within a month I had my prostate removed. I truly believe that PSA testing saved my life.

Dale

PSA testing saved my life. In 2010, my GP saw a change in my PSA numbers. Nothing significant, ranging from a 2.0 to a 4.5, and back down again. My GP turned me over to a urologist, whom scheduled me for a biopsy. The biopsy showed that I had

Founded in 1998, Malecare Cancer Support is America's leading prostate cancer survivor support and advocacy nonprofit organization. Learn more at www.malecare.org

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prostate cancer. Six months later, I had an open radical prostatectomy. The biopsy on the prostate showed that the cancer was more advanced than originally thought. Without the PSA testing, I would now be fighting prostate cancer, which more than likely would have spread to other areas of my body, through radiation and or chemo.

John

After undergoing a biopsy, I was diagnosed with inoperable Prostate Cancer. For five years prior to the diagnosis, I had 6 monthly PSA and digital inspections, my PSA were 5.0 and have never been higher.

At the first digital inspection, there were lumps in my prostate, but I was told by my MD that they were caused by age. It was only on my request that I was sent for a biopsy. Eight specimens were taken and they all came back positive.

My Gleason score was 4+4=8 and the cancer had moved outside the Prostate. I was told by the urologist that I had a very aggressive cancer. The only options I was given, was hormone treatment and radiation. I was on Lupron for 6 months then received 36 radiation treatments. The radiation damaged my bowel and anus also I am Impotent and have ED.

I was having tri-monthly Lupron injections for about five years, then my PSA started to rise again to 5, I was informed that my cancer was in the advanced stage and I was prescribed Casodex, as well as the Lupron.

I have been passing quite a lot of blood in my urine for the past 3 years, but after 2 exploratory operations which failed to stop the bleeding, I was told I had to live with it, as they couldn't find the source of the bleeding.

Last month (October 2009) my PSA started to rise again and I was advised to see a Medical Oncologist regarding the advances in Chemo for the problem. The oncologist did not recommend that I be treated by chemo, but suggested that I go on a Trial, being run by Cougar Biotechnologies, who are testing the drug, Abirateron Acetate plus Prednisone (CB7630). I have agreed to take place in this trial, but there is a 50% chance that I will be administered a placebo, as it is a randomized Double Blind Placebo Controlled Study, which of course means that if I get the Placebo, I will not be receiving any medication for the length of the trail, except my Lupron injections (choices, choices).

The cancer has now moved into a 2.5cm lymph node in my abdomen, so it is spreading. I am now in the lap of the Gods, wish me luck!

Dick

My Father told me that he had prostate cancer when he picked me up for a drive home from college some 50 years ago. He said not to worry, the doctors could cure it. He was in his late 50s then. I heard it came back, but much distance separated us, then he said he was cured again. We moved closer and found the cancer had come back and spread to his bones. Then followed several years of watching his slow decline and increasing pain.

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He was stoic about the physical pain, took his pain pills. He lived at home, had Hospice care, but outlived the time they could cover him, but somehow there was an extension.

The greatest pain for Dad, I saw in his face and eyes was the indignity of becoming dependent, of turning his living room into a hospital room, the indignity of not being able to be clean.

One day he stood up and his cancer eroded hip fractured and spilled him to the floor, Mother couldn't help him. The Ambulance took him to the hospital where they promptly gave him a hip replacement implant — and in so doing closed the door to further Hospice care. Mother at age 80 tried to take over, too frail to properly support him.

Fortunately, (can I really use that word?) the metastases had invaded his other organs and their failure took his life, ending the pain in his bones and heart. Starting about age 40 (I'm 71 now) I had annual PSAs and DREs; I knew that the family history increased my risk level. Three years ago my PSA went up, just over 4. Although Dad had been gone for 15 years the very present memory of the horror of his last years made my decision for me. The cancer had to be out of my body as fast as possible. I had IGRT and my PSAs have dropped to negligible values. I know we can never assume that the cancer will never come back, but I feel I've done the best I can so far to make sure my family does not suffer anything like the burden of care that my Father's cancer inflicted upon my Mother."

Paul

During an exit physical exam, a company doctor said, Paul, you are getting king of old (age 66). I want u to get a blood test for prostate cancer. My PSA was 4. I went into a watchful waiting mode and enjoyed sex for several more years while my PSA went up to 26.

I had a prostatectomy June 1998. There were 8 cc's of cancer in my prostate gland and two positive margins. Gleason 7. Five & 1/2 years later my cancer returned. I now have advanced PCa and am on intermittent hormone therapy successful so far. My oncologist & I allow the PSA to go from near zero to 10. Then I take the hormones and the PSA goes back to near zero. Then the treatment is repeated and repeated.

I firmly believe I would be dead by now (age 84) if it wasn't for the Boeing doctor recommending I get a blood test for PSA when I was 66. Early testing for prostate cancer should be accomplished on all men who want to do it via a blood test for PSA, and a digital rectal exam (DRE) for lumps.

Allen

The VA tests my PSA every three months to see if my cancer has started to grow again. When the PSA goes up to an unsafe level, they change my treatment. Since prostate cancer thrives on testosterone, there is a shot you can take to stop the production of it.

When I am not producing it, the cancer doesn't grow. After two or three years, the cancer mutates to grow without it. When that happens, the PSA test shows it, and they stop the shot and the cancer stops growing, actually becomes dormant, because there is testosterone. In a few years, when the cancer starts growing again because there is testosterone there, they start the shot again. This has gone on for over 20 years, and the PSA still shows when to start or stop the shot. I feel that it is a lifesaver.

Anonymous

I was diagnosed with prostate cancer at age 45, underwent surgery, and have enjoyed the last nearly eight years with little to no side effects. I will always feel fortunate to have had a physician who believed in starting PSA testing at age 40. The first few annual tests were within the normal range, but by age 42, my numbers had started to move up. Over the next few years, my physician followed a thoughtful course:

- * re-test after a few months to make sure the results weren't a fluke
- * administer antibiotics to treat a possible infection and re-test after a few months
- * refer to a urologist for an ultrasound and DRE
- * biopsy

The biopsy results showed a Gleason Score of 6, while the post-op biopsy showed a Gleason Score of 7. This was a relatively aggressive cancer, and I feel strongly that I would not be in my current good health if I had waited to start testing at 50. I have become an advocate for prostate cancer awareness, and particularly of getting younger men to understand the importance of starting testing at 40.

An elevated PSA isn't necessarily a trigger for immediate surgery, but it is an indication that your prostate needs monitoring!

Kevin

My PSA's were 4.5 when I was first tested, I opted for the x-ray radiation treatment, and Lupron shot. Now my PSA's are at 1.5.

I finished my treatments in June, this year (2011). I had a biopsy after the first high reading, and it had showed the beginning of prostate cancer. I don't know what all the controversy is about; as far as I'm concerned the test works.

Bill

My first test was at the age of 54...PSA 4.1; follow up biopsy showed 9 of 12 samples positive. I had surgery one month later and it saved my life...why not improve what we DO have instead of discouraging the use of the only reliable test available? Men need to get tested.

Anonymous

It saved my life I was 49 healthy working 6 days a week 12 hr. shifts and life was good. I went for a routine cholesterol test and my doc ordered a PSA I didn't even know what it was. Came back a 10 not supposed to be above a 4 went to a urologist had a biopsy and had to have a radical prostatectomy right away cancer was aggressive and moving fast.

If my doctor did not have this done I would not be here now. I am 5 yrs. recovering had to retire but life is REAL GOOD now no worries just enjoying my kids and grandkids I am at peace. Have a PSA it's just a 1st step and there are more tests to have to prove if it is cancer or not but have the test it's a start that could save your life too.

Christopher

I was adopted as an infant and had/have no knowledge of my biological family's medical history.

With no side effects or symptoms of any kind, my first PSA blood test at age 47 saved my life.

My PSA was 62.7 My biopsy show cancer in 10 or 12 cores with Gleason scores of 7 (3+4) and 8 (4+4), one with a tertiary 9.

My post-surgery pathology report presented as stage 3Tb, with positive margins, seminal vesicle and lymph node involvement – a very advanced and aggressive strain.

I am lucky to have had it caught at all. Had I not gone to my doctor for an intestinal infection when I did, instead of waiting until my annual physical some four months later – my prognosis would not be what it is today.

Anonymous

My doctor should have been alerted to my stage 4 PCa when my PSA doubled. It only went from 1.8 to a still low 3.6 in a year but my doctor and most other doctors did not know at the time that it's the velocity not the actual number that is more important. A mere nine months later, when I was experiencing severe fatigue, a CT scan showed an enlarged lymph node. A biopsy of that lymph node showed that the PCa had already metastasized. This same nine months later my PSA was now 4.2, in the range where some doctors would not even begin to do testing but just watch.

For me a PSA test every 6 months would have saved me and my family a lot of heartache. I have been given 3-5 years to live. Imagine if.....

Charles

With urinary issues I was sent for a sonogram that the reviewer concluded was simply an enlarged prostate gland. Six months later I availed myself of a free "screening"

regarding the prostate that included a PSA test as well as digital rectal examination (DRE).

The DRE was suspicious and the Urologist suggested that when the PSA results came back, to visit with whomever Urologist I chose. PSA was elevated to 6.8ng/ml and subsequent biopsy followed by radical prostatectomy determined Gleason Score 3+4/7. However, a tumor was found to be extended into “fatty tissue” so salvage radiation was administered. Yet, despite surgical removal followed by salvage external beam radiation my cancer still recurred three years later.

Imagine how advanced this cancer could have become had the free prostate screening with PSA test and DRE not been available. With subsequent on/off/on/off androgen deprivation therapy I continue to survive 19 years later. Being aware of one’s PSA level was and continues to be extremely important as a biomarker providing evidence that something is out of order and requires attention. Accompanied by the DRE the PSA was and continues to be an appropriate method of identifying the possible development of prostate cancer.

No man should be deprived of the knowledge of the presence of cancer in his body. The importance is in the diagnosing physician then providing a comprehensive explanation of what the diagnostics indicate and all the options available to the patient. Ignorance may be bliss, as the saying goes, but certainly not so when cancer may be in development. We continue to NEED the PSA blood serum test accompanied by the DRE until something equally or better and as cost effective is determined. Physicians are not to play God and keep from us diagnostic procedures that may make a difference to our continued living or early demise because they failed to make available to us a simple procedures like the PSA test.

Anonymous

Was diagnosed with an aggressive mucosal (no idea how to spell that word) version of prostate cancer at age 45. When I finally gave in to having the prostate removed, at the age of 47, it was already on the verge of exiting the prostate. Thank goodness I was diagnosed early enough with the PSA testing, and the doctors remained persistent to the point I allowed them to remove it within time.

David

I had my doubts when my physician insisted that I have a baseline PSA taken at age 40. At age 48, my baseline had doubled and started increasing geometrically. Thankfully, my physician’s vigilance caught my prostate cancer at an early stage, allowing me to have focal cyroablation. I didn’t realize until much later that he also probably saved my life. Two uncles, with whom I had lost touch, each are suffering from metastatic prostate cancer. They did not have physicians who insisted on PSA screening.

Bill

I never thought I would have prostate cancer. My annual physicals showed the PSA numbers rising from the 3 range to the 4 range, to the 5 range, and finally into the 6 range. Stubborn as I was, I finally took my family doctor's advice, saw a urologist, and had a biopsy, which showed 6 cores out of 12 positive, Gleason 7 (3+4). Without those PSA tests, I would almost certainly now find myself with metastatic disease. Instead, my cancer was organ contained and my prognosis is good.

John

When I turned 40 I asked my then doctor for a PSA test. I told him my father had died of prostate cancer and I knew I was high risk. He asked me if I had urinary or erectile issues, to which I replied no. He smiled and said well if you start having problems we'll test you. My wife encouraged me to change doctors which I did. My new doctor gave me a complete physical including a PSA test and a rectal digital exam. This was my first exam ever. The doctor felt a nodule and I had a PSA of 1.0. I went through the biopsy and was confirmed Gleason score 6 prostate cancer. I had robotic prostatectomy to remove the cancer. Had my doctor not done the testing I would be looking at the same death my father endured. Prostate cancer testing saved my life.

Joe

Hello, my name is Joe, at 37 years old, my PSA was at 5.8, I had a biopsy and it was negative. A year later, my PSA was 6.1, they did a deeper biopsy with more samples and that's when they found out I had prostate cancer. I'm so thankful that my doctor was making sure I was getting my PSA checked. I had the robotic surgery and 2 years later I'm cancer free.



Now that you have read through many patient and family stories, please decide for yourself if you want to have a PSA test.

The cost of PSA tests is covered by Medicare and most health insurance plans.

Speak to your doctor or visit a local medical clinic.

Prostate Cancer information and support from hundreds of other guys who have been where you are now, is only a click away, at www.malecare.org