



Prostate Cancer
Foundation of Australia

BLUE SKY NEWS

ISSUE 82 | AUGUST 2022 EDITION

**WORLD FIRST
PROSTATE
CANCER
FUTURE FUND**

Our bold quest to save lives

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

**EPIGENETICS AND
PROSTATE CANCER**

Can the dance of your DNA determine cancer survival?

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WIN A HAMPER FOR DAD'S DAY

With Father's Day just around the corner, we're giving one lucky reader an Interflora hamper valued at \$149.

Simply email enquiries@pcfa.org.au to go in the draw. As a friend of PCFA, you can also get \$15 off orders over \$100, with 5% of all proceeds to our work – just enter the coupon code PCFA15 when you buy online.



➔ Go to interflora.com.au/occasions/pcfa



THE FUTURE IS OURS TO CREATE

Welcome to the August 2022 edition of Blue Sky News. In this edition, we take an in-depth look at PCFA-funded research into epigenetics, in our quest to control one of the key factors driving prostate cancer progression and aggression.

We also give you a snapshot of new figures that reveal prostate cancer has overtaken breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer in Australia. In response, we unveil our Prostate Cancer Future Fund for research.

May no man die before his time, because together we can make prostate cancer history.

With your Will, we can find a way.

If prostate cancer has impacted your life, please consider leaving a gift in your Will to PCFA.

When you make the decision to leave a gift in your Will to PCFA, your legacy will help to save the lives of our fathers and sons, funding Australian prostate cancer research and investing in a future free from the pain of prostate cancer.

Find out more by calling our team today on 1800 22 00 99.

Adjunct A/Prof Steve Callister
National Board Chairman

Professor Jeff Dunn AO
Chief of Mission and Head of Research

➔ Email enquiries@pcfa.org.au to request a free Wills guide.

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



While information on cancer is all around us, knowing who to trust can be challenging.

A simple web search of prostate cancer will return 238,000,000 results – not all of them backed by evidence.

That's why we've just launched a project to create Australia's first Prostate Cancer Survivorship Toolkit.

The toolkit will provide men, their partners, and their families with essential advice and evidence-based resources to manage the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer.

PCFA Chief of Mission and Head of Research, Professor Jeff Dunn AO, says the toolkit will give men the knowledge and strength they need to navigate prostate cancer.

"The diagnosis of prostate cancer can be a major life stress, with long-term impacts on a man's quality of life and wellbeing.

"Deciding on treatment can leave men feeling dazed and confused, giving rise to fear and uncertainty.

"Research shows one in four men



PCFA's new cancer counselling team

experience anxiety or depression as a result of their diagnosis, with an increased risk of suicide.

"In response, over the next 12 months we plan to co-create this toolkit with patients and health professionals, synchronising it with our Specialist Nursing Services and new Counselling Service.

"Our aim is to provide men with clear and easy to understand

guidance, as well as access to expert care.

"Importantly, we want the web-based toolkit to provide men with a virtual clubhouse for connecting with other survivors and supporters."

As many as half a million Australians are expected to access the toolkit, with more than 240,000 men alive today after a diagnosis of prostate cancer.

PROSTATE CANCER SPECIALIST NURSING SERVICES



100,000

OCCASIONS OF SERVICE EACH YEAR



46,000

TELENURSING MINUTES ON THE PHONE



4,000

CALLS FROM MEN AND THE COMMUNITY



104

SPECIALIST NURSES NATIONWIDE

➔ Phone 1800 22 00 99 or email telenurse@pcfa.org.au for support.

EPIGENETICS & PROSTATE CANCER

**CAN THE DANCE OF
YOUR DNA DETERMINE
CANCER SURVIVAL?**



For decades scientists have suspected that epigenetic modifications play a key role in prostate cancer development and progression. Now, new evidence is emerging that could help create a way to tell what prostate cancer will do, before it takes hold.

Researchers say if it proves effective, the diagnostic tool could extend the lives of thousands of Australian men each year, preventing avoidable deaths from prostate cancer.

Dr Pierre-Antoine Dugué is a Senior Research Fellow in the team of Professor Melissa Southey, Chair of Precision Medicine at the School of Clinical Sciences, Monash University, where his research focuses on the link between genetic, epigenetic, and lifestyle factors and men's risk of, and survival from, prostate cancer.

His research finds him among a worldwide group of pioneers at the forefront of epigenetic research into prostate cancer. He holds undergraduate degrees in Mathematics and Physics, as well as a Master



Dr Pierre-Antoine Dugué

of Science in Statistics awarded in France, where he worked as a biostatistician at the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research in Paris, analysing data from clinical trials of cancer patients.

He also holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Health and Medical Sciences from the Department of Public Health at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, where he studied cancer epidemiology and prevention through screening. Around eight years ago he moved to Australia to take up an appointment as a Research Fellow in Cancer Epidemiology, with the aim to improve our understanding of how to predict cancer risks and prevent cancer mortality.

Earlier this year, he was granted a PCFA Priority Impact Research Award to accelerate a project exploring the dance between epigenetics and prostate cancer survival, progression, and outcomes.

“Prostate cancer presents a major challenge – many men are diagnosed with the disease, but at the early stages we can’t tell which tumours will become metastatic and spread,” he says.

“Many people wrongly assume prostate cancer is less deadly, but it is the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths among Australian men.

“The goal of my research is to bring prostate cancer under control by being able to predict its future behaviour. My current focus is very much on precision medicine, working with patients to try and determine whether we can predict and improve their survival.”

“My main objective will be to identify patients who are high risk or low risk of their cancer spreading, so we can make better decisions about treating the disease and minimising invasive procedures or starting early with more powerful medicines.”

Dr Dugué says trends in prostate cancer incidence have moved like no other cancer in the past 20 years – increasing greatly, which means efforts to detect the disease early have resulted in a larger volume of tumours to manage.

“When we compare prostate cancer to other cancers, we haven’t learned as much about stopping it from spreading and knowing how it will behave.

“With so many men being diagnosed, research into prostate cancer is very complex, but it doesn’t receive an equal level of funding to other major cancers.

“The funding horizon for prostate cancer researchers is very uncertain, which is why PCFA research grants are so important. PCFA does a great job of identifying the projects that deliver the greatest good for the greatest number of men, as soon as we can.

“The project PCFA is funding is a critical piece of a much larger global effort that must continue.”

WHAT IS EPIGENETICS?

Chair of Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia’s Research Advisory Committee, Professor Lisa Butler, describes epigenetics as the dance of DNA.

“The literal meaning of “epi” is most often given to an effect created by external factors –

in this case the effect of environment and behaviour on a person’s genetics and DNA,” she says.

“Epigenetic research examines the way biological factors can influence the expression of your genes, without changing your DNA sequence.

“One common example of epigenetics is called DNA methylation, which is a chemical reaction caused in the nucleus of a cell when a small molecule, called a methyl group, attaches to your DNA.

“Problematic DNA methylation is known to influence prostate cancer progression and aggressiveness, which is why this field of research may be key to unlocking curative prostate cancer treatments and better ways of managing the disease.”

DR DUGUÉ’S RESEARCH

Dr Dugué is at the forefront of a much larger global effort to subtype prostate cancer and predict what it will do by analysing tumour methylation data.

Notably, he is working with a large collection of prostate cancer tumour tissue,

contributed by Australian men, allowing a large-scale examination of genome-wide tumour methylation data.

“There are about 800 tumour samples in the collection, and we are actively working with around 600 of these. In other international regions researchers are lucky to have samples from 100 or 200 patients, so we are very lucky to be able to draw on this remarkable resource, collected over many years,” he says.

Combining his medical and scientific expertise with his knowledge of biostatistics, epidemiology, and public health, he hopes to map epigenetic markers to predict how different prostate cancers will grow, allowing clinicians to develop more targeted treatments for the disease.

“The results of our research will be vital to clinical decision making, and may help to give men a more accurate clinical prognosis so that we can find the best treatment pathways to deliver precision care for each individual patient.”



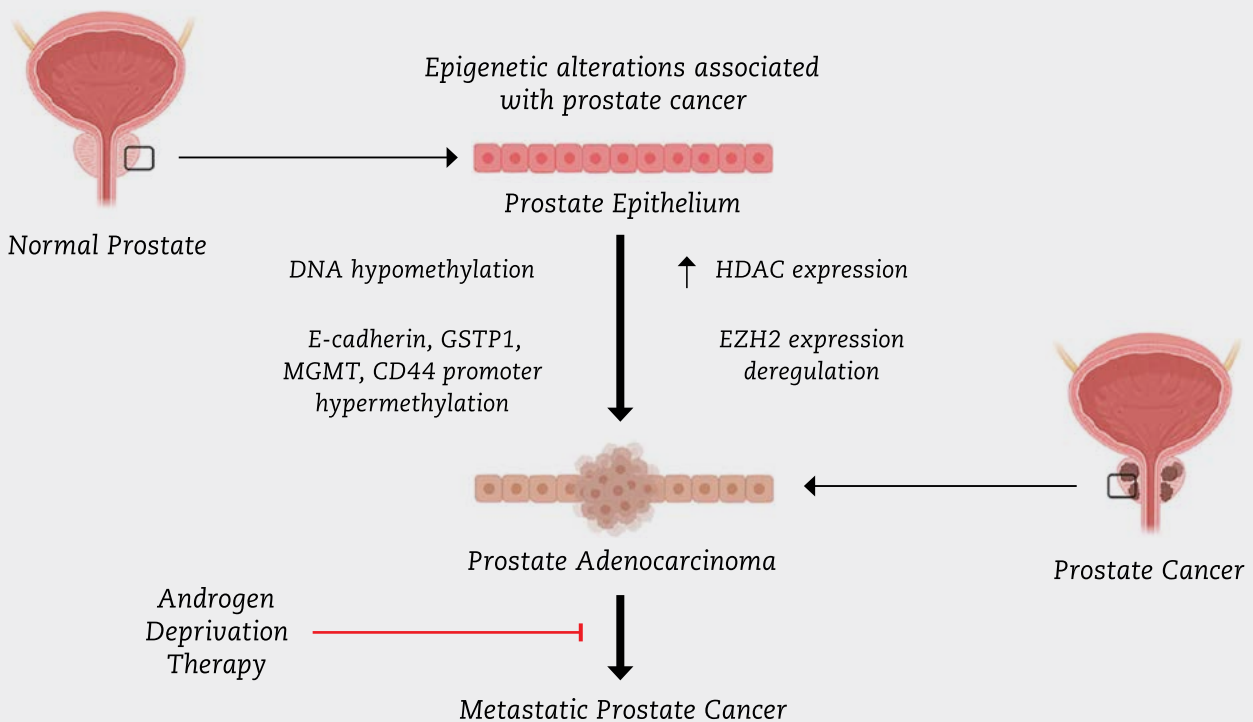
“If this trial proves the efficacy of the tool the researchers are working on, it will represent significant progress in the understanding and treatment of prostate cancer for men here in Australia and worldwide.”

Chair of PCFA’s Research Advisory Committee, Professor Lisa Butler



Dr Pierre-Antoine Dugué

How your environment can alter the expression of your genes



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

A CALL TO ACTION ON PROSTATE CANCER

Prostate cancer is now the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia, overtaking breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer.

New Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data estimates 24,217 Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, compared to 20,640 women diagnosed with breast cancer.

New Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data estimates 24,217 Australian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year, compared to 20,640 women diagnosed with breast cancer.

The forecast is a 34% increase on the estimate for last year, providing a wake-up call for policy makers and practitioners alike.

“For many men, this news comes as no surprise, confirming the growing number of men they have seen diagnosed in their community,”

says PCFA Chief of Mission and Head of Research, Professor Jeff Dunn AO.

“For PCFA, this news confirms what we have been saying for some time – that prostate cancer is among the greatest challenges facing men’s health in Australia, and simply cannot be ignored.

“The fact is that prostate cancer accounts for more hospitalisations than any other type of cancer in the country and we cannot afford to underestimate the toll it takes on our health services and our families.

“Increasing funding towards research, awareness, and support is vitally important to ensure safe, timely, and effective care. But we can’t do it alone.



Jeff Dunn

“Today, we set our sights on now and tomorrow, that no man may die before his time. You can expect us to act on this news with great resolve, to engage policy makers and practitioners in co-creating a new way forward. This is a call to action for all Australians.”

There are 240,245 Australian men alive today after a diagnosis of prostate cancer, and 66 men are now being diagnosed every day.

1 in 5 Australian men will be diagnosed in their lifetime. Together we can help.

24,217

Australian men are diagnosed each year.



↑ 34% INCREASE

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

630,000 MEN AT DOUBLE RISK OF PROSTATE CANCER

1 in 5 Australian men will be diagnosed in their lifetime



New figures reveal 630,000 Australian males may face double the average risk of prostate cancer, highlighting the need for new community awareness campaigns targeting men at risk.

The figure is based on the number of Australian men diagnosed with prostate cancer over the past 40 years who are now likely to have male offspring.

“The data will help us to target men who face a much higher risk of the disease,” says MNC Actuaries Project Leader, Joseph Chan.

“It gives policy makers strong justification for public health activity on prostate cancer.”

Your Family History – The Facts



- If your father or brother have ever been diagnosed with prostate cancer, you have twice the average risk of developing the disease.
- If you have two or more close male relatives who have been diagnosed, your lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer increases five-fold.
- Your risk also increases if you have a strong family history of breast or ovarian cancer, especially if a BRCA1 or 2 gene mutation was involved.

➔ Email enquiries@pcf.org.au for more information and donate to research via pcf.org.au/donate



*Prostate cancer survivor and PCFA National Chairman
Adjunct Associate Professor Steve Callister*

THE FUTURE IS OURS TO CREATE

YOUR NEW PROSTATE CANCER FUTURE FUND

PCFA has established the world's first Prostate Cancer Future Fund, in a bold quest to help find a cure for prostate cancer.

Its causes remain unknown, it can't be prevented, and often it strikes without warning.

And now all that is about to change, thanks to the establishment of the first Prostate Cancer Future Fund in Australia's history, with the ambition to accelerate life-saving research into the disease.

PCFA National Chairman, Adjunct Associate Professor Steve Callister, says the fund will be a defining legacy of PCFA's work.

"PCFA's Future Fund is a major undertaking that will provide a linchpin for the ongoing expansion of our research strategy.

"Notably, it will match short-term objectives with a long-term vision, serving our community like never before, and providing a sustainable foundation for the acceleration of ground-breaking research into prostate cancer."

The fund will focus on research priority areas such as finding ways to diagnose and detect prostate cancer more accurately, treat it more effectively, prevent it from occurring, and predict what each patient's cancer will do.

We have come a long way towards the defeat of prostate cancer, increasing five-year survival from 60% to 90% today.

Our investments in the ProPSMA, TheraP and EVOLUTION clinical trials are delivering incredible breakthroughs, resulting in the Medicare listing of PSMA PET/CT scanning and the advent of LuPSMA treatment.

"But we still have more work to do. Prostate cancer only receives half the funding dedicated to other major cancers. If we can double funding for research, we will get much closer to eliminating avoidable deaths.

"With community backing, we can fund research today that saves lives tomorrow, so that no man need die before his time of prostate cancer."



\$40M

Invested in research over the past 10 years



100+

PCFA Nurses providing care



70,000

Men have seen a PCFA nurse



95%

Five-year survival rate

➔ You can donate to the Future Fund by calling PCFA on **1800 22 00 99** or via pcfa.org.au/donate

LOVE, LIFE, SURF, AND SURVIVORSHIP

TIM BAKER TALKS PROSTATE CANCER

Tim Baker is the world's number one surf culture anthropologist. He lives, breathes, and writes surf. He also has advanced prostate cancer.



Writing from his home on the Gold Coast, Tim Baker is nervous.

“Hi, I’m Tim. Diagnosed with stage 4, metastatic prostate cancer on July 7, 2015. PSA 120. Gleason score 9. Lesions in right femur (thigh bone) and left seventh rib.

“Those of you with a maths brain might have already calculated that was nearly seven years ago. In that time, I’ve had early chemotherapy (docetaxel, six cycles at three-week intervals) with concurrent hormone therapy (Zoladex), targeted radiation, ongoing intermittent hormone therapy, and have undergone a TURP (transurethral resection of the prostate). I think it’s fair to say I’ve been through the wringer.

“I was told at the beginning of this ‘journey’, I could expect five years of reasonable health, that six would be ‘exceptional’. And yet here I am nearly seven years on, at 57, largely asymptomatic, still surfing, writing, being a dad and a husband. I’ve had my share of dark days and the stress



Tim Baker at home on Australia’s East Coast

and anxiety has taken a toll on my marriage, my family, my ability to earn a living and sense of social connection. But I’m still here and, for the most part, life is good.”

The award-winning journalist, storyteller, and author of nine books has just released his first autobiography, documenting his experience with prostate cancer.

Praised by critics and readers, *Patting the Shark* is no ordinary story. It’s a book that is impossible to put down, telling of Tim’s efforts to navigate his way through the maze of treatment, meditation,

diet, exercise, emotional support, and counselling.

Ultimately, it is an impassioned plea for a more integrative approach to cancer care, to treat the whole man and not just the disease.

As the book’s blurb so eloquently puts it, “This is a story about facing your mortality, staring down your fears, and working out what really matters in life, when so many elements of your identity are stripped away. It offers hope, comfort and empathy for anyone facing a cancer diagnosis and their loved ones.”



The surfer and author



Go to penguin.com.au/books/patting-the-shark-9781760898915 to buy the book now.

Latest news on prostate cancer: PROGRESS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

We are proud to be part of a worldwide community working to combat prostate cancer. Every day, our work helps to inform new developments in the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer at home and abroad. Read more about what's in the news right now.



Distant-stage diagnosis doubles in the USA: PSA testing under the spotlight

In 2012, the US Preventive Services Taskforce recommended against PSA testing for all men, reversing past practice. Now, new data has found that in the past 10 years the proportion of prostate cancers diagnosed at advanced stages has doubled. The finding will be examined in our review of the Australian Clinical Guidelines for PSA Testing.

[Click here to read more](#)



TheraP 3-year follow up proves positive: LuPSMA effective against prostate cancer

The three-year follow up results from the TheraP study for men with metastatic prostate cancer has just been published, demonstrating continued benefits. The results found a continued favourable response, defined by reduction of PSA by 50% or more, observed in 66% of people assigned to receive Lu-PSMA compared to 37% with cabazitaxel. Results of the trial also demonstrated the treatment had less severe side-effects than chemotherapy.

[Click here to read more](#)



The double vs triple dilemma: Australian leaders advocating for new standards of care

World leading clinicians here and abroad have rapidly adopted emerging evidence to introduce new standards of care in the treatment of metastatic hormone-sensitive prostate cancer (mHSPC). An editorial published recently in the journal European Urology Oncology provides an insight into the evidence weighing up double and triple therapies, which combine androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) with either docetaxel chemotherapy or novel hormonal therapies. They conclude that given ongoing use of ADT alone in many patients, advocacy for combining ADT with novel hormonal therapies, known as doublet therapy, should remain a focus over adoption of triplet therapy as a first step to improving outcomes for patients with mHSPC.

[Click here to read more](#)



Predicting prostate cancer prognosis could get easier: Scientists discover new biomarker

Scientists in Sweden have discovered a biomarker that could lead to the development of a new method for the early prediction of prostate cancer aggression and metastasis. Commenting on the findings, the lead researcher said the discovery could lead to the development of a new prognostic test within two to three years. The research represents a breakthrough in understanding signalling pathways in the growth of prostate cancer tumours, with global implications for management and treatment of the disease.

[Click here to read more](#)

To subscribe to our monthly email newsletter, email enquiries@pcfa.org.au or phone 1800 22 00 99

NEW MEDICINE LISTINGS

Advocacy in Action

Your support, our influence – transforming care and saving lives

This year we have seen the dawn of a new day for men with prostate cancer, thanks to the listing of new medicines and treatments which drastically reduce out-of-pocket costs.

Darolutamide/NUBEQA®

📅 Listed November 1, 2021

💰 Saving men \$40,000 per year

For men with non-metastatic castration resistant prostate cancer

It works to block testosterone from attaching to androgen receptors – delaying the spread of prostate cancer cells to other parts of the body and decreasing risks of death by over 30%.

Apalutamide/Erlyand®

📅 Listed May 1, 2022

💰 Saving men \$40,000 per year

For men with non-metastatic castration resistant prostate cancer

It works by blocking the action of testosterone in cancer cells and prevents the hormone androgen, which plays a role in prostate cancer growth, from binding to the androgen receptor.

Olaparib/Lynparza®

📅 Listed April 1, 2022

💰 Saving men \$45,000 per year

For men with BRCA mutations and metastatic castration resistant cancer

It works as a 'PARP inhibitor' by blocking the activity of proteins that enable cancer to spread, making it difficult for cancer cells to survive. Gene testing is also subsidised for eligible patients.

PSMA PET/CT SCANNING

📅 Listed July 1, 2022

💰 Saving men up to \$1,200 per scan

For men with intermediate and high-risk forms of prostate cancer

PSMA PET/CT scans are more accurate than conventional imaging, minimising exposure to radiation and allowing clinicians to more effectively monitor and manage prostate cancer.

Thanks to your support, we now have more than 100 nurses Australia-wide.



PCFA Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses



HELP LOVE GO THE DISTANCE

All it takes is what you've got.

Run, walk or wheel 72km this September
for Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Sign up now →

🔍 thelongrun.org.au



#thelongrun



☎ 1800 22 00 99