What Your Patient Reads

Prostate Cancer Treatment: Are We Doing Too Much?

The CBC web site on October 19, 2007 reports prostate cancer is being over-diagnosed and over-treated. Quoting physicians and researchers the web site states that “men are having surgery they don’t need.” Dr. Laurence Klotz, a urological oncologist at Toronto’s Sunnybrook Hospital is quoted as saying "Patients are often told they have low risk cancer however most men opt for radical treatment, either surgery or radiation.” He adds, "Many of my colleagues think prostate cancer equals removal." Dr. Klotz favours aggressive testing but conservative treatment. Dr. Klotz is leading START (Surveillance Therapy Against Radical Treatment) a 15-year international study in Canada, the United States and England, comparing the surveillance approach to radical treatment.

The whole story can be viewed at: www.cbc.ca/news/background/cancer/prostatecancer-toomuch.html

CBC Article’s Key Points
- Prostate cancer is over diagnosed in Canada leading to overly aggressive treatment
- Radical treatments for prostate cancer can have severe negative repercussions
- Early detection and monitoring or conservative treatment is best, depending on the risk

Klotz’ Key Points
- Widespread screening diagnoses prostate cancer that does not pose a threat to life.
- Active surveillance is best and involves:
  1. Identifying men with a low likelihood of disease progression,
  2. close monitoring,
  3. developing criteria for intervention which will identify more aggressive disease in a timely fashion and not result in excessive treatment, and
  4. communicating the rationale of untreated cancer.

Referenced Work


Additional References from the Medical Literature


To obtain a copy of the articles listed or to request a literature search on this topic please contact the VGH Library at 477-3307.

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