



Prostate Cancer - now the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK

Alf Turner, Chair of Prostate Project 02/06/2020

Data analysed by the charity Prostate Cancer UK (2 June 2020) show that for the first time in history, prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK. Cancer diagnoses in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales bring the total number of prostate cancer diagnoses in the UK to 57,192, exceeding those of breast, lung and bowel cancers.

Public Health England says it is because more men are getting tested, due to the 'Fry and Turnbull' effect; celebrities, like **Stephen Fry**, **Bill Turnbull** and **Rod Stewart**, raising awareness by speaking out about their own experiences



Matt Perry, Consultant Urological Surgeon & PP Trustee being tested for COVID-19 prior to surgery

The Prostate Project is actively campaigning to increase awareness of prostate cancer symptoms and to encourage men to visit their GP, because if the disease is caught early, cure rates are excellent. This is a key part of our campaign to '**Wage War on Prostate Cancer**' since over 11,700 men die unnecessarily of the disease every year.

We are delighted that men are heeding our advice and we are currently campaigning to ensure men do not suffer in silence and continue to see their GP during the COVID-19 pandemic. We've found that hospital referrals have decreased dramatically over the past few months as many

men are reluctant to visit their GP because they see the NHS under strain and they are worried about having to visit hospital when there is Covid19 around.

We want to reassure men that the health service is working very hard to reduce any risks and it is safe for them to seek help. For example, in our new Stokes Centre for Urology at the Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford clinicians have put in place social distancing initiatives to protect patients and are undertaking video calls to replace some in person consultations.

Echoing comments made by Angela Culhane, the chief executive of Prostate Cancer UK, we are also very aware that we urgently need to continue to invest in cancer research to develop new and better

treatments for prostate cancer, and new diagnostics to determine whether the cancer is aggressive or slow growing.

Our research team, led by Prof Hardev Pandha at the **University of Surrey** is leading the way, developing a new simple blood test to determine whether a man's prostate cancer has morphed into a new aggressive form of advanced prostate cancer which requires different treatments to the ones they are currently receiving.



Hardev Pandha, PP Trustee, Consultant Oncologist at RSCH and Professor of Medical Oncology at Uni Surrey

They are also working on a brand new immunotherapeutic approach using a 'cancer-killing' virus to invigorate the immune cells in prostate cancers. This will make them responsive to powerful new immunotherapy drugs (called immune checkpoint inhibitors) that the team is also developing. By teaching the body's immune system to target and destroy the cancer cells, this will result in long-term tumour control in patients and prolong their life expectancy.

COVID-19 has not only disrupted this research but has impacted our ability to fundraise to help fund it. Any donations you may be able to make during these difficult days will make a huge impact on the support we can give. The Prostate Project is a volunteer-run charity, with only 5% overheads, meaning nearly every penny donated goes towards giving men a better chance of beating prostate cancer (donations <https://www.prostate-project.org.uk/donate-1.html>)



Stephen Langley, PP Trustee & Professor and Clinical Director of Urology at the Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford – in COVID free operating theatre

Notes

Prostate cancer is diagnosed by using the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test, biopsies and physical examinations. There can be few symptoms of prostate cancer in the early stages, and because of its location most symptoms are linked to urination: frequent need to pass urine, particularly at night, delay before urinating and/or interrupted flow, needing to run to the toilet, feeling your bladder has not emptied fully, pain in passing urine or when ejaculating, blood in semen or urine, nagging pain in the lower back or hip area

However, such symptoms are often associated with non-cancerous conditions such as an enlarged prostate, prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) and urinary infection. Men with prostate cancer can also live for decades without symptoms or needing treatment because the disease often progresses very slowly.

Enormous progress has been made on breast cancer over the last decade which was the former number one cancer. Lets now step up a gear even further on Waging War on Prostate Cancer.