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**UROLOGIC SCIENCES**  
UBC

Vancouver Prostate Centre's

# PCSC POST – Summer 2014

Welcome to the second edition of the PCSC Post, a newsletter to bring you up to date with the activities of the Vancouver Prostate Centre's Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program



We are pleased to announce that the BC Ministry of Health is providing \$1 million to VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation to support men's health through the Prostate Cancer Supportive Care Program, which offers support to prostate cancer patients and their partners for the physical and emotional side effects of the disease.

"We have come a long way in the treatment of prostate cancer with more men getting diagnosed early and living longer than ever before. With more patients living longer, we now have a greater responsibility to help them and their families' access services and information that will ensure they are living cancer-free for longer".

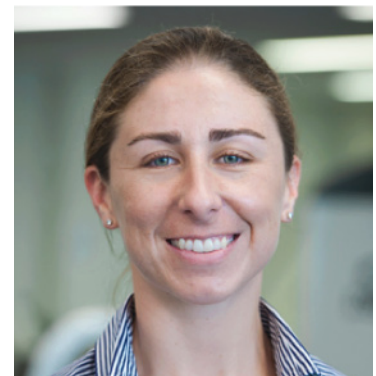
**S. Larry Goldenberg**

CM, OBC, MD, FRCSC, FCAHS

## "Enhancing physical, mental and sexual wellbeing through exercise" A Special Guest Lecture for the PCSC Program!

On Tuesday September 23rd 2014, Dr. Prue Cormie will deliver a presentation which will discuss the efficacy of exercise in counteracting significant adverse treatment-related effects and improving the physical, mental and social wellbeing of men with prostate cancer.

Dr. Cormie is a Senior Research Fellow at the Edith Cowan University Health and Wellness Institute in Perth, Australia. She currently holds a competitively funded research fellowship from the Cancer Council of Western Australia. Dr. Cormie is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, whose research and clinical work focuses on the role of exercise in the management of cancer, particularly prostate cancer. Dr Cormie's recent research has explored the potential of exercise to improve sexual wellbeing in men with prostate cancer, and determined the safety and efficacy of exercise in men with bone metastatic disease. A core component of her work is invested to translating research into practice to improve health care services for cancer patients/survivors.



**If you would like to attend this lecture please register with the PCSC Coordinator at [PCSC@vch.ca](mailto:PCSC@vch.ca)**

### PCSC PROGRAM NEWS

- The 4th edition of 'The Intelligent Patient Guide to Prostate Cancer' written by Drs. Goldenberg, Pickles & Chi, is now available. This book is an invaluable resource for Canadian men suffering from prostate cancer and equips patients with the knowledge needed to take an active part in their treatment.
- The book used in the Adapting to ADT module "*Androgen Deprivation Therapy: An Essential Guide For Prostate Cancer Patients And Their Loved Ones*" is now published and available at Demos Health.
- The first "Introduction to Primary Treatment Options" information session was given in Surrey, BC in January, 2014.

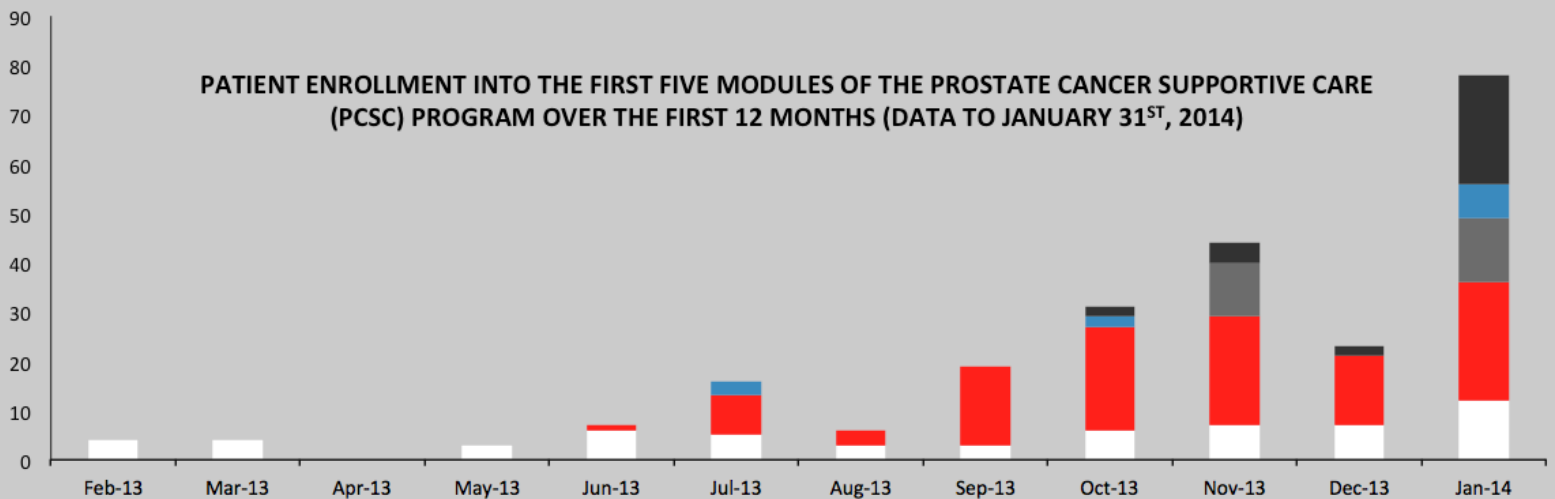
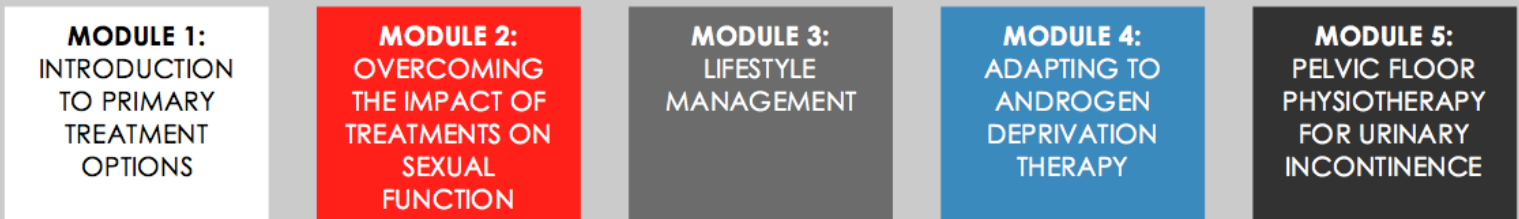
## PCSC Program at the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council 2014...

We are now approaching a year and a half since the doors first opened at the PCSC Program. In February 2014 the PCSC team was invited by our funder, the Special Services Committee (a joint committee between the Doctors of BC and the BC government) to present a poster at the BC Patient Safety & Quality Council's annual forum. Here are some of the highlights from the poster:

### The need for supportive care:

- The average life expectancy has increased by ~30 years since prostate cancer was first discovered, and men now often live decades after diagnosis and treatment.
- Curative treatments are possible, but side-effects impacting bowel, bladder and penile function are common with all treatments.
- Studies going back to 1994 show that the psychological distress on the partners of prostate cancer patients is often greater than that on the patients themselves.
- There are many treatment options available for prostate cancer, though all have some degree of adverse effects.
- This makes choosing a treatment particularly stressful thus supportive care must begin at diagnosis.

Since our last newsletter, we have expanded the number of educational sessions and clinical services we offer. We now offer five modules with five more planned for the future. Both module 2 (Sexual Function) and module 5 (Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy) include clinics for patients and partners.



In the first year of our program, January 2013 to January 2014, 148 patients and 70 partners enrolled in at least one module of the PCSC Program and we continue to grow each month. Feedback from participants in all areas of the program has been overwhelmingly positive. We appreciate your comments and feedback to help us make our services for patients, partners, and family members more effective.

## Adapting to Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT)...

As noted in our last PCSC Post, the “Adapting to ADT” module enrolled its first patients last July. The module utilizes the ADT Educational Program, funded by Prostate Cancer Canada via the Movember Foundation. The goal of this program is to help prostate cancer patients on ADT improve their quality of life as well as maintain intimate relationships. Our ADT educational program is designed to help prostate cancer patients take appropriate actions to reduce or avoid the negative impact of this treatment.

The program begins with a 1.5-hour group educational session introducing patients and family members to ADT, the side effects of ADT, and management strategies for these side effects. We introduce attendees at these sessions to goal setting exercises to help them make lifestyle changes that can prevent or reduce ADT side effects. Both patients and partners receive a copy of the book ***Androgen Deprivation Therapy: An essential guide for men with prostate cancer and their loved ones***, which they can read at their own pace. There is then a 1.5 hour group follow-up session 2-3 months later to assess the progress made with the book and an opportunity to ask questions.

The ADT educational program is now running in Vancouver, Calgary and Victoria. By the end of 2014, we anticipate having the program activated in Toronto and Halifax, and in 2015, we plan to launch the program in Montreal. Furthermore, with Prostate Cancer Canada support we intend to make the ADT educational program available online so patients and partners across Canada can participate. The funding for this initiative includes support for research to evaluate the effectiveness of both the live and online programs in helping patients and partners adapt to ADT.

The team behind the ADT educational program has created a website to coincide with the publication of the book, ***Androgen Deprivation Therapy: An essential guide for men with prostate cancer and their loved ones***. This website, LIFEonADT.com, not only provides information about the book and the educational program, but also has a blog which summarizes recent findings related to ADT.

## The Lifestyle Management Module of the PCSC Program is now offering ‘Fundamentals of Physical Fitness for the Prostate Cancer Patient’ information seminars

A healthy lifestyle has been shown to improve the quality of life of prostate cancer patients. In addition to our regular seminar ‘Nutrition Advice for Prostate Cancer Patients’, the PCSC Program is excited to announce a new educational seminar, which will be presented by Sarah Weller, Kinesiologist, Exercise Physiologist and Certified Cancer Exercise Specialist, titled ‘Fundamentals of Physical Fitness for the Prostate Cancer Patient’. This will be a 1-hour evening session, held every three months at the Gordon and Leslie Diamond Health Care Centre at VGH. Our first presentation, scheduled for Wednesday July 2nd, 2014, will cover physical fitness programs that are workable for patients in all stages of their disease and all levels of fitness.

In addition to these information seminars, patients are invited to join one of two local exercise programs that meet the needs of prostate cancer patients:

- 1) The Healthy Heart Program at the Diamond Health Care Centre, for patients starting on Androgen Deprivation Therapy.
- 2) A 6-week individualized strength and cardio program at Back on Track Fitness for patients at any stage pre- or post-treatment.

Announcements regarding other lifestyle-based programs and research studies which fit with the philosophy of the PCSC Program (healthy eating, exercise, stress reduction, etc.) will be made in due course.

**If you are interested in learning more about any of these programs, or would like to attend this seminar, please contact the PCSC Program Coordinator, Phil Pollock, at 604-875-4111 ext. 22946 or email [PCSC@vch.ca](mailto:PCSC@vch.ca).**

## Dr. Richard Wassersug's Paper Pick

In each issue of the PCSC Post, Richard flags papers in the area of prostate cancer supportive care that he thinks are both particularly interesting and relevant to readers of the PCSC Post. Here's his latest...

### Coping With Prostate Cancer Matters—The Couple's Perspective

If you are reading this essay, you are probably a prostate cancer patient, or a family member or friend of a prostate cancer patient. So how are you coping with the situation? It turns out that psychologists, who study distress in cancer patients and ways to reduce it, sort coping into several different strategies. Two major ways to cope are recognized: problem-focused coping and emotional-focused coping. But there are additional ways to cope that are possible, such as social support seeking.

There are situations where each strategy has merits, and situations where they clearly do not work, and just add to one's anxiety and despair. So, for example, problem-focused coping is a good idea, if the problem is solvable by taking on a new action. If one is a patient on hormone therapy and is losing muscle, they are likely to feel physically tired and increasingly weak. These are known side effects of that treatment. A problem-focused approach would be to join a fitness class. Exercise has been shown to preserve muscle mass and reduce fatigue in prostate cancer patient on those drugs.

When the problem, is solvable, like fighting muscle loss while on hormone therapy, then a problem solving approach is the way to go. In general, prostate cancer patients, who use problem-focused coping, show lower anxiety and depressive symptoms.

But what if a problem is beyond our own means to solve it? So, for example, one might be a patient, who has been on active surveillance, but is now facing a rising PSA. A new biopsy is scheduled, but we may be increasingly anxious about what that biopsy will discover. We can't just take a simple action to reduce our PSA. But worrying doesn't help either and surely avoiding the biopsy won't lower our PSA. Often, though—too often—men in such situations use emotional-focused coping that includes self-blame, avoidance, or denial to their detriment.

Sadly I just talked to an old friend from decades ago, who had a rising PSA that climbed from 4 to 33 over six consecutive measurements taken in the last three years. Each time he got his new PSA results he did his best to push the bad news out of his mind. When he finally had his biopsy and then contacted me, he was found to have high-grade disease.

For him, earlier social support seeking would have been a better way to go. If he had talked to others about his anxieties early on—which meant acknowledging rather than denying them—he would have not been paying the higher emotional price that he now faces. Almost a decade ago, in a review of how prostate cancer patients cope, Roesch and colleagues showed that men with prostate cancer who used avoidance coping experienced heightened psychological distress and poorer physical health in the long run.

Now there is a new and elegant study by Anaïs Lafaye and her colleagues in France that takes the study of coping with prostate cancer to a higher level. Those researchers investigated the interaction of the coping strategies used by both prostate cancer patients and their partners. It has been known for 20 years that the psychological burden of prostate cancer is often greater on the partners of patients than on patients themselves. But how does each partner's coping style affect the overall distress of their partner?

I couldn't say it better than the authors do, so let me quote from their paper's abstract:

[W]hen patients use problem-focused coping or social support-seeking, they, as well as their spouses, experience fewer anxiety and depressive symptoms. Conversely, patients or partners who use emotion-focused coping experience higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms. Finally, and it is a surprising result, when spouses seek social support, patients feel greater anxiety.

### FURTHER PCSC PROGRAM NEWS

- Thursday July 3rd, 2014: our Sexual Health Clinician Christine Zarowski, will be presenting on "The Impact of Prostate Cancer Treatments on Sexual Function" at the Vancouver Prostate Cancer Support & Awareness Group. Contact [lengross@shaw.ca](mailto:lengross@shaw.ca) for more information.
- Surviving prostate cancer is half the battle; support needed for post-treatment. An interview with Dr. Richard Wassersug, Co-Lead of the PCSC Program: <http://www.vchri.ca/feature-stories/articles/2014/06/02/surviving-prostate-cancer-half-battle-support-needed-post>

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I share with the authors some surprise at that last result. But their paper is short and they provide neither a more detailed analysis nor any case studies to illustrate what might be going on. I can though envision a scenario that would easily fit the pattern.

Let's say that a patient is using avoidance and denial (i.e., aspects of emotional-focused coping) to deal with his prostate cancer and his partner is doing the best she can (all the research in this area so far is for heterosexual couples) to take a problem solving approach. In simple terms, he doesn't want to think about or talk about any symptoms or side effects he is experiencing. She, however, is researching ways to mitigate his symptoms and side effects. Their coping strategies are incompatible and ultimately that leads to conflict. Their inability to agree on his situation raises her distress levels and she finally seeks social support as her way to cope.

Whether she goes crying on her sister's or best friend's shoulder, or goes to her physician to complain, the mere fact that she is seeking social support means that she is talking about his problem. Knowing that means that his use of denial is hampered. He is forced to face his anxiety and openly acknowledge them, when he knows that others know about them.

One might ask, "What can either the patient or his partner do now to reduce their distress level?" In fact, what might have helped avoid the crisis in the first place? Clearly understanding each other's coping strategies and being open to talking about them would have helped. But what would have helped most of all would be his willingness at the outset to: 1) avoid avoiding and 2) share his anxieties with her. What prostate cancer couples can do, when emotional-focus coping is over-taking them, is to seek social support. And nothing could be better than providing that social support for each other. But that, of course, means talking sincerely and openly about their fears and anxiety. Tough at first perhaps. But the studies show that both patient and partner will be better off in the long run.

#### References:

- Roesch SC et al. 2005. Coping with prostate cancer: a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. 28(3): 281-293.
- Lafaye A et al. 2014. Dyadic effects of coping strategies on emotional state and quality of life in prostate cancer patients and their spouses. *Psychooncology*. 2014 Feb 3. [Epub ahead of print]

## Pacific Northwest Prostate Cancer Conference Saturday September 13th 2014...

The 14th Annual Pacific NW Prostate Cancer Conference takes place on Saturday September 13th at the Gordon & Leslie Diamond Lecture Theatre, BC Cancer Research Center, 675 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, and is an annual patient education event. In previous years the conference alternated between the Seattle and Portland areas. However, for the first time, Vancouver will join by video conferencing. This conference provides state-of-the-art updates on prevention and early detection of prostate cancer, treatment of localized prostate cancer, medical management of advanced prostate cancer, and current knowledge about the role of nutrition in prostate cancer. Highlights of current clinical trials likely to change the standard care in coming years will be prominently featured. Patients and loved ones, men at risk for prostate cancer, and healthcare professionals interested in learning more about survivorship issues and treatment options are welcome to attend. Attendees get a chance to present their questions to the panel of experts at the conference.

To find out more about this event please contact the PCSC team at [PCSC@vch.ca](mailto:PCSC@vch.ca)

### Contact Us...

If you are interested in finding out more about anything described in this newsletter, the schedule for upcoming sessions, to book an individual appointment, or if you'd like to suggest other topics to be covered in these newsletters, please contact the PCSC Coordinator:

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