



Below the Belt!

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June – August, 2019

Newsletter of The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.
(ABN No. 35 871 442 176)

Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse.

In the last issue 'Below the Belt' we told of the announcement of a very generous funding grant to provide Specialist Breast Care Nurses and the comparatively small grant to provide similar nurse positions to assist Prostate Cancer patients. Of particular concern to us in Western Sydney, was the fact that in an earlier allocation of a limited number of Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse (PCSN) positions, no allocation had been made for Western Sydney.

Things have moved on!

Prior to the publication of the last Newsletter, we had received notification that this anomaly had been addressed but, at that time, we were unable to share this with our members.

It is now official!

A position of Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurse has been created at the Nepean Hospital.

Following is an excerpt from a letter we received from the PCFA.

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What's to Come

Group Meeting – Monday June 17th

Amanda Stevanovic – Clinical Director NCCC

Current and Up To Date Issues with Medical Oncology and Prostate Cancer

Meeting – Monday July 15th

Open Forum

Subjects of interest to Members

Group Meeting – Monday August 19th

Not Available at this stage.

Refer local press close to the meeting date

All meetings :- Gather at 6-30pm for a 7-00pm start.

David, I am now in a position to reply to your letter of the 8th February, regarding PCFA's taking full opportunity regarding adequate funding for Prostate Cancer Specialist Nurses (PCSN), making their funding an election issue and availing PCFA of Support Group assistance.

I am not sure if you have followed in detail the announcements last week by both sides of politics. PCFA were very pleased that the budget announced a continuation and expansion of the PCSN program from 28 to 62 federally funded nurses over the next four years. In addition the Leader of the Opposition announced this last Saturday an increase from 28 to 70 nurses. As you can see the result is bipartisan and so there will be an increase of nurses whoever the government of the day will be after the forth coming election.

In addition to the federally funded nurses PCFA through community and philanthropic means also funds an addition 20 nurses around Australia. Combined with the above announcements we would hope that there will be 90 plus nurses placed during the period.

It is via the PCFA community method of funding that I am very pleased to write to you to say that today I have signed a funding agreement between PCFA and Nepean Hospital for the placement of a PCSN. These discussions have been under way for some time and were of course confidential until today. The recruitment process for the nurse will commence immediately and we look forward to as early a commencement as possible.

I am sure you and all the members are very pleased with this announcement.

PCFA is also very pleased to announce the Nepean Hospital in particular, plus the major increase in nurse numbers announced by both major parties in the last week.

Many thanks for your group's continued caring and efforts in reducing the effects of prostate cancer on men and their families in the Nepean/Blue Mountains and beyond.

If you have any questions or I can be of any assistance please call.

Best regards
Steve Callister
National Chairman PCFA

Latest information is that the position has been created, advertised, interviewed and an announcement will be made 'soon' How soon? We believe Mid June!
Watch this Space!



Dragon Boating – Dragons Abreast Regatta - Darling Harbour

Our Group has been supporting this event for the past 11 years.

We have been advised that the event will not be held in 2019.

The Organisers are reviewing their options and hope to be back 'Bigger and Better' in 2020.

John Kemp – NBMPCSG Promotions Officer

What a “Gem” of a man we have in John Kemp (*maybe a bit of a ‘Rough Diamond’ but a ‘Gem’ none the less!*)

John is the man that organises our participation and presence at various events / displays etc.

John works tirelessly (*) in promoting awareness of Prostate Cancer around the Nepean & Blue Mountains area.

This includes organising our participation in the Penrith Relay for Life, our information stand at various events such as the Australia Day celebrations, Bunnings store activities, shopping centres etc.

John took it on himself to organise our Group brochures being placed in all Doctors practices throughout the area.

He was also the driving force behind the Group’s new banners.

He has visited the PCFA Headquarters in Sydney and built up a strong personal relationship with the staff there thereby increasing our presence within that Organisation.

He cannot be expected to do this job on his own!

(Actually, John is not ‘on his own’ – he is always supported in his efforts by his ‘right hand man’ – sorry Woman, his lovely wife Christine! Thank you Chris, we appreciate the great support that you give John)

So, next time when John speaks at our regular monthly meetings and asks for people to help out at an event, why not help him out and add your name to his list.

() Not entirely ‘tirelessly’ – see his report of our participation in the Relay for Life!*



Cancer Council Training

We recently received advice about the next Cancer Council NSW training for Support Group Leaders. This course will be taking place on Thursday 24 October, 9am – 5pm at their NSW headquarters in Woolloomooloo. It’s so important for existing leaders to continue to refresh those facilitation skills.

This training would be especially useful for any members of your group who may be considering stepping up into a leadership or co-leadership role in the future.

If you would like to attend this course please speak to a Board Member and make your intentions known.



John with one of the Group’s new banners

Penrith Relay for Life - 2019



Our Display at the Relay showing the new Banners

Here is John Kemp's wrap up of the Penrith Cancer Council Relay for Life held (for this group), just on the Saturday 4th May

Several members arrived at 7-30ish to help set up our day tent side, (thank you men). It was quiet cold and pretty windy all morning, (we could not set up our table display properly because all our brochures kept blowing away!).

Six Members / Carers attended the Opening Ceremony & Survivors laps, then headed to the Relay tent for the Survivors / Carers Morning Tea, (very nice being waited on by all the young school kids)

Then it was on for the day, leisurely doing laps, chatting & resting, despite the strong cold wind it was good being there, & being part of Relay, there were approximately 78 team & about 1000 people registered for this Relay, sadly, down a bit on previous years..

The highlights for me were, in equal order.....



The Chinese Lion Dancers also paid a visit to the Relay

The support from our Support Group Board Members, & Partners, (whether they were on site or not) & other members who called in during the day,..... You know who you were. Thank you!

The Dear Friends who came on Saturday afternoon & kept me honest in doing my laps..... Thank you,

To the couple who came after we had packed up & gone home..... Sorry, but Thank you.

Our Support Group have just bought 3 new Banners; one is a strip banner that goes across our tent with our ID on it, (looks very good).

The other 2 are "Teardrop" banners, that have in big letters

PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT & INFORMATION,

What was exciting, at least 4 people who saw the sign came over to ask questions and chat about Prostate Cancer. The signs will be on display at our next meeting.
(Check the photo to see the new banners)

The downside to the day,

(a) The JK mentioned in a previous piece written about the Relay, failed by just 4 laps to do what he set out to do, (Head was willing, but Body said NO). But he had a great day all the same. (* This is the bit I referred to in the item about John Kemp aka 'J.K')

(b) There were many people, who said the relay website was very difficult to navigate, hard to get onto to join a team, or donate money, they were right. This has been brought to the Cancer Councils attention, I cannot tell you how much the Prostate Pals team raised because of this..



Part of the Candlelight Ceremony and 'Lap of Silence'

At about 6 pm, the team started stripping our site down, Attended the Candlelight Ceremony & Lap of Silence, at 6-30, (the most moving, personal lap of the entire relay), watched the excellent fireworks display, returned to our site, loaded the cars and went home just after 7-30pm. leaving younger, fitter teams to walk the cold night shift

Thank you all who came, set up, walked, sponsored, packed up, though small in numbers, great on the day.

Will we see YOU next year??

John Kemp,
Promotions Officer
Nepean/ Blue Mountains
Prostate Cancer Support Group



Presentation to Penrith Gaels Cultural and Sporting Club



President David with Gaels Assistant Manager Bernie

In the last issue of our Newsletter we had an item regarding the generosity of the Members of the 'Gaels' in supporting the Group while raising awareness of Prostate Cancer.

At our recent Board Meeting held at the club, we were able to present the club with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Name Change for Andrology Australia

Andrology Australia has recently changed its name. They are now known as 'Healthy Male' the new web address is 'healthymale.org.au'

The site continues to be a source of information on all subjects associated with (you've probably already guessed) Men's Health.

A recent article is of particular interest.

Nerve grafting procedure restores erectile function after surgery for prostate cancer

A prostatectomy (surgical removal of the prostate gland) is a standard treatment for prostate cancer and has a good rate of success in curing the cancer. Unfortunately, the prostatectomy procedure can cause nerve damage to surrounding tissues and as a result many men experience erectile dysfunction that is not easily treatable using usual therapies.

A surgical team based in Melbourne have refined a nerve grafting technique that involves removing nerves from the lower legs and grafting them to make a new connection between the major nerve in the upper thigh and the muscle tissue in the penis. This technique aims to resupply the penis with nerve function previously lost.

The results, published in the journal [European Urology](#), showed that the refined nerve grafting technique successfully restored erectile function in 71% (12/17) men who were in the study. This outcome has great promise for overcoming the inevitable side effects of prostatectomy that affect sexual function.

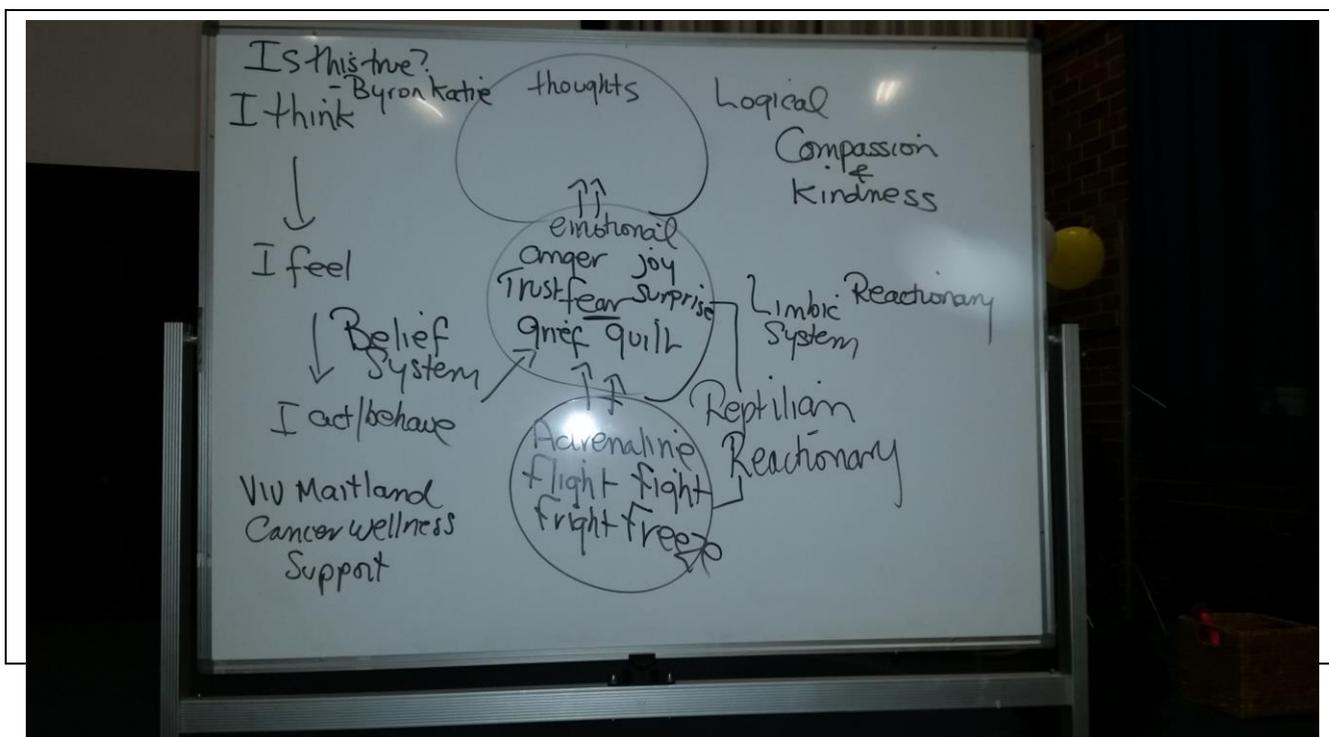
(This subject is also covered (in more detail) in a recent article by Dr. Wendy Winnall on the PCFA Online Community Research Blog)



Talk by Viv Maitland – Cancer Wellness Support

At our May monthly Group meeting we again welcomed Viv Maitland from the Cancer Wellness Support Centre. This was Viv's second visit to our Group. She previously spoke to us at our November 2018 meeting.

This time Viv took us for an interesting 'stroll' through our brain!
Here is Viv's white Board presentation to help jog your memory.



Blocking fatty acid uptake: a new approach to treating prostate cancer

A new Australian study has uncovered a weakness in prostate cancer cells. The researchers studied the energy needs of prostate cancer cells grown in the laboratory and in mice. Their results indicate that blocking fatty acid uptake may slow the progression of prostate cancer. This research blog describes the latest findings, discusses fatty acids, and whether we need to avoid them.

Obesity and prostate cancer

Obesity is a major problem in Australia. Almost two thirds of Australians are considered overweight and over a quarter are considered obese ([AIHW statistics](#), 2018). People who are obese have a higher chance of suffering poor health. There is evidence that obesity is associated with aggressive prostate cancer. Men who are obese are more likely to get aggressive prostate cancer. They are also more likely to die from prostate cancer than those who are not obese.

That obesity brings a risk of aggressive prostate cancer does not mean that obesity is the only cause of this disease. Men who are not obese also get prostate cancer. It's believed that many different risk factors combine together to cause the damage to DNA that causes prostate cancer. Many of these risk factors are things that we can't do anything about.

Far from blaming men for their disease, the Melbourne researchers behind this new study have gained a new understanding of what is different about the way prostate cancer cells use energy sources. The results of their study have uncovered a weakness in the prostate cancer cells that could be exploited by drugs. Hopefully a new type of treatment will result from this knowledge.

Prostate cancer cell metabolism

Humans have a metabolism - our food is broken down, energy is generated and waste products are formed. In a similar way, individual cells have their own metabolism. Metabolism, in this case, refers to the chemical reactions inside of the cell that make energy and the cell's infrastructure. Cells take up carbohydrates, proteins and fats, which are turned into energy, cellular building blocks and waste products.

The metabolism of cancer cells appears to be different to normal cells. This is not surprising, as tumours often grow very quickly compared to normal tissues. Certain types of PET scans can be used to detect tumours because they use a lot of glucose to grow.

But not all cancers are the same. Prostate cancers do not show up well on the PET scans that look for fast uptake of glucose. It turns out that prostate cancer cells don't use a large amount of glucose, like most other cancer cells.

Two recent discoveries set the scene for this new Australian project: 1) prostate cancer cells grown in the laboratory mainly use fatty acids as an energy source, and 2) a diet high in saturated fats for men with localised prostate cancer increases their risk of dying. This led researchers Prof Matthew Watt and A/Prof Renea Taylor to predict that blocking fatty acid use as energy could slow the progression of prostate cancer.

What are fatty acids?

Fatty acids are molecules found in many fatty foods. There are many different types of fatty acids, including the unsaturated, saturated and trans fats that we commonly eat. Although some fatty acids are part of a healthy diet, many people eat too many, or the wrong kinds. Many of the fatty acids that we eat are not considered healthy, such as saturated and trans fats.

The Australian study did not address fatty acids in the diets of men with prostate cancer. Rather they looked at what was going on inside the body. There are good reasons for this. Cells take up fatty acids from different origins. One is from fatty acids eaten in our diets. Another is from fatty acids produced in our bodies by a process called *de novo lipogenesis*. This refers to the conversion of carbohydrates into fatty acids as storage. When a lot of carbohydrates are eaten, the excess ones are converted into fatty acids, to be stored in the body. This mostly occurs in the liver and in fat cells. When someone hasn't eaten for a while, fatty acids are released from the fat storage and used as energy. So cancer cells can get their energy from fatty acids that were made in the body, rather than eaten by the patient.

New Australian study

The Australian researchers are based in Melbourne and work at the University of Melbourne, Monash University and other top research institutes around the country. Their [successful project](#) was funded by PCFA through a Movember New Concept Award to Prof Matthew Watt. Their findings were published in the highly-ranked journal Science Translational Medicine.

The Australian team made a number of discoveries about how prostate cancer cells use fatty acids as an energy source. They showed that more fatty acids are taken into prostate cancer cells than normal cells. These experiments were done on human prostate cancer cells grown in the laboratory. They then studied a *fatty acid transporter molecule* called CD36. This protein is located on the cell surface and helps the cell to take in fatty acids. The researchers wondered if CD36 played a crucial role in tumour growth. Using mouse experiments, they showed that:

- Removing CD36 from mice meant that less fatty acids were taken in to prostate cancer cells growing in the mice,
- Mice with no CD36 had slower progression of prostate tumours to an aggressive form,
- An inhibitor of CD36 could reduce the severity of cancer in mice with transplants of human cancer cells.

These results indicate that the fatty acid transporter molecule called CD36 could be a new target for treating prostate cancer.

More exciting results came from testing a *dual-targeting* experiment. The researchers used two different drugs to slow prostate cancer growth. One inhibited fatty acid uptake by targeting of CD36. The other inhibited the conversion of carbohydrates into fatty acids. These two drugs were tested on human prostate tumours grown in the laboratory. Blocking fatty acid uptake reduced prostate tumour growth to 40% of untreated tumours. Blocking conversion of carbohydrates alone had a similar effect. Best results came from both drugs together, which slowed tumour growth to only 10% of the untreated tumours.

This research had uncovered a weakness in the prostate tumours that could be exploited by a new treatment approach targeting cell metabolism. This new approach has only been tested on tumours grown in the laboratory, not on humans. Hopefully these exciting findings will lead to a drug development project to attempt a similar approach for humans.

Should we avoid eating fatty acids?

The terms *fatty acids* refers to many different products found in foods. It includes “good fats” such as omega-3 fats found in nuts and oily fish. It also includes “bad fats” such as saturated fats (found in dairy and meat fat) and trans fats (found in highly processed foods and bakery goods). Eating too many “bad fats” can be bad for your health. It causes obesity and raises cholesterol levels, causing heart disease. Healthy eating guidelines recommend limiting the saturated and trans fats that we consume.

We know that men with prostate cancer who eat higher levels of saturated fats are more likely to see their cancer turn aggressive. PCFA recommends men with prostate cancer limit foods containing saturated and trans fats, in accordance with the [Australian guide to healthy eating](#).

PCFA are proud to have funded this successful project through a Movember New Concept Grant.

(This article by Dr. Wendy Winnall was recently posted on the PCFA Online Community Research Blog <https://onlinecommunity.pcfa.org.au/>)



Jack is having a bad day.

He tried to button his shirt and the button fell off.

He picked up his briefcase and the handle fell off.

He went to open the door and the doorknob fell off.

Now he's afraid to pee!



I BEFORE E
 except when your foreign neighbor Keith receives eight counterfeit beige sleighs from feisty caffeinated weightlifters.
WEIRD.

THE NERDS

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PAYMENT OF Membership Fees. Members can pay their annual Group Membership Fees by direct deposit to our bank account. Our Westpac Account Name is 'Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group'. BSB is 032-837 and the Account No. is 206701. Current Fees are \$10.00 P.A. per family. Don't forget to advise who you are in the Lodgement Reference i.e. "John Smith Fees 2019"



Would you like to make a cash donation to our group?
 Do you know any Group or Organisation that would like to make a donation?
 We are a registered charitable organisation and all donations are fully tax deductible.
 All donations help us to support cancer and health related projects in our local area.
 If you are able to assist, contact our Treasurer, Graeme Renshaw.

Board Members of the Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group for 2019 are as follows:-

President :-	David Wilkinson
Vice President / Treasurer :-	Graeme Renshaw
Secretary :-	Ross Baker
Assist. Secretary :-	Wayne Singleton
Librarian :-	Bob Wittrien
Newsletter Editor:-	Alan Howard
Publicity / Web Site Manager :-	Peter Murphy
Promotions Officer :-	John Kemp

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Group.
The Group does not offer medical or other professional advice.
Articles presented in this or any other issues are presented only as a means of sharing information and opinions with members.
It is important that health professionals should be consulted before making any decisions about any treatments.
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