



## Predicting Prostate Cancer Patient Outcomes

A Prostate Cancer Researcher at the University of Adelaide, Dr Rajdeep Das's research will open up new and exciting avenues for personalised cancer medicine for prostate cancer patients.

Through this project Dr Das hopes to predict patients' responses to prostate cancer treatments to improve their survival outcomes, reduce unnecessary side-effects caused by the drugs and overall, ease Australia's economic burden of prostate cancer.

"Prostate cancer is a leading cause of cancer related deaths in Australian men, with one in five men at risk of being diagnosed with the disease in their lifetime," Dr Das said.

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Dr Das is paving the way for research into personalised treatment for prostate cancer.

## Personal Experience Inspires Community Support

Having survived prostate cancer, Ian Wagner is today using his past experience to inspire and support other men.

Now heading up a National Support Group for men living with prostate cancer, Ian enjoys being able to work with leaders in the field to ensure patients are supported in the best way possible.

At the time of his diagnosis, Ian was living in Alice Springs after moving to the outback town in 1973 with his wife and children.

"I was born in Adelaide, but commuted the family to Alice Springs for my job and we loved it so much we ended up staying for 40 years."

Diagnosed in 2009 when he was 68, Ian admits he had little idea about what the prostate was, and its function, let alone the notion of PSA levels.

"At the time I didn't know what a prostate or PSA test was," Ian said.

**"I had been told my prostate was enlarged, but I didn't think it was anything to be concerned about."**

Living in a remote location, Ian didn't have ready access to a urologist, who only visited monthly and at that stage had a waiting list of nearly two years.

"By the time I had seen the urologist he had some concerns but I couldn't have a biopsy until the next visit," Ian said.

"If I knew then what I know now I would have been on the plane to Adelaide, but I was naive as most men are about the situation."

Eventually having a biopsy, Ian's results came back positive, and with a significantly high PSA level of 28, the decision to operate was made instantly.

Ian's open radical prostatectomy was booked for November, giving him the chance to attend his daughter's wedding that was to be held in October.

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## Predicting Prostate Cancer Patient Outcomes cont'd

"Data shows more than 90 per cent of prostate cancer related deaths result from metastasis, where the cancer has spread and is no longer confined to the prostate gland.

"Considering prostate cancer cells significantly rely on the male hormones called androgens, the standard treatment for men who suffer from metastatic prostate cancer is androgen deprivation therapy (ADT)."

ADT involves castration by chemical or surgical means to markedly reduce the level of androgens and thereby block prostate cancer cell growth.

"While most men initially respond positively to this treatment, the disease inevitably progresses to a state called castration-resistant prostate cancer (CRPC), which is incurable and lethal, with patients generally dying within two years of onset," Dr Das said.

This is where Dr Das and this important research comes into play, as while there are a number of drugs available to treat men with CRPC, a large proportion of men do not respond to these drugs.

"One of the main reasons for such treatment failure is a lack of biomarkers that can predict response to the treatment modalities available for CRPC men," he said.

Through his project, Dr Das aims to investigate molecules in circulating tumour cells (CTCs), which are cells that have shed into a patient's blood from the primary tumour as well as metastatic lesions that circulate in the blood stream.

"CTCs can be readily and repeatedly obtained through a simple blood collection," he said.

"Biomarkers predicting the treatment response will then help doctors to determine which drugs will have the most benefit for that patient."

Dr Das says that this will also enable better sequencing of the drugs.

"For example, if the biomarker predicts non-response to a drug, the patient could immediately receive an alternative therapy – and vice versa," he said.

From this research, doctors may be able to prescribe personalised treatments for patients to ensure each individual receives maximum benefit from the drug prescribed to them.

**"My research will open up avenues for personalised cancer treatment where drugs will be custom-fitted based on the patient's molecular disease status."**

## Personal Experience Inspires Community Support cont'd

"I had a much enlarged prostate, the size of an apple, and because of that I ended up with a prolonged recovery in hospital," Ian said.

"I didn't have to undergo radiation or hormone treatment so I am the lucky one."

The only side effects for Ian were incontinence and erectile dysfunction; however after five years and three procedures he has largely overcome the incontinence problem.

### **"As I say to everyone, hey I'm alive!"**

Since his diagnosis Ian has made it his life's work, through his involvement with community groups, to become an advocate for raising awareness and supporting other men, and their families, suffering from prostate cancer.

"I joined the Alice Springs prostate cancer support group when I knew I had the potential to have cancer, and my journey really started from there."

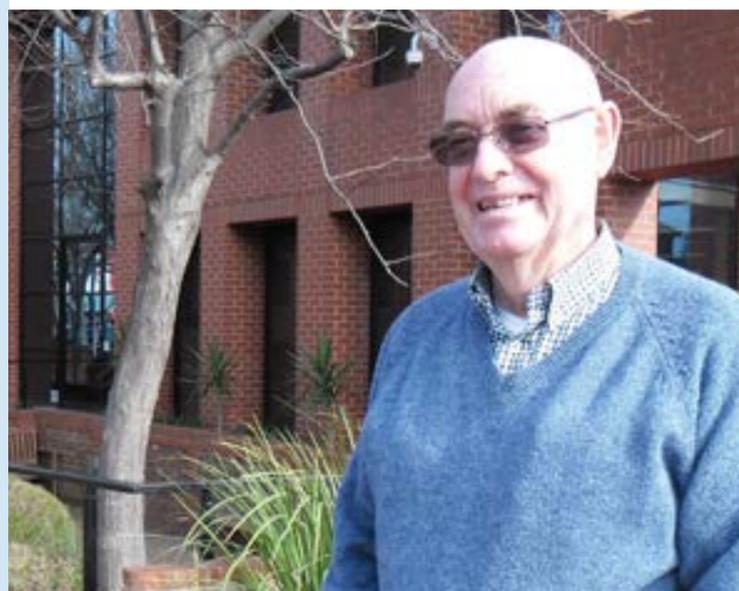
Since relocating to the Adelaide Hills in late 2013, Ian has become a member of the Adelaide Hills Prostate Cancer Support Group and the Prostate Cancer Action Group.

"I have always been community minded; it felt like a natural progression for me."

Six years on, Ian's PSA levels remain negligible and his six monthly check-ups will move to annually.

If you want to chat to Ian or find out more about a Support Group near you, he would love for you to contact him on 0409 534 950.

Thank you to Ian for sharing his story with us!



Giving back to the community, Ian supports men and their families living with prostate cancer.

## Helping Patients make Informed Treatment Decisions

Urologist Dr Darren Foreman wants to improve treatment options for men with low risk prostate cancer. Working with the clinical prostate cancer databases of the South Australian Prostate Cancer Clinical Outcomes Collaborative (SA-PCCOC), supported by Australian Prostate Cancer, Dr Foreman has been studying active surveillance, a concept of prostate cancer management that involves identifying men with low risk prostate cancer and observing them on their journey.

"We know prostate cancer varies between slow growing and aggressive. Active surveillance involves trying to identify the less aggressive cancers and following these men rather than treating them immediately," Dr Foreman said.

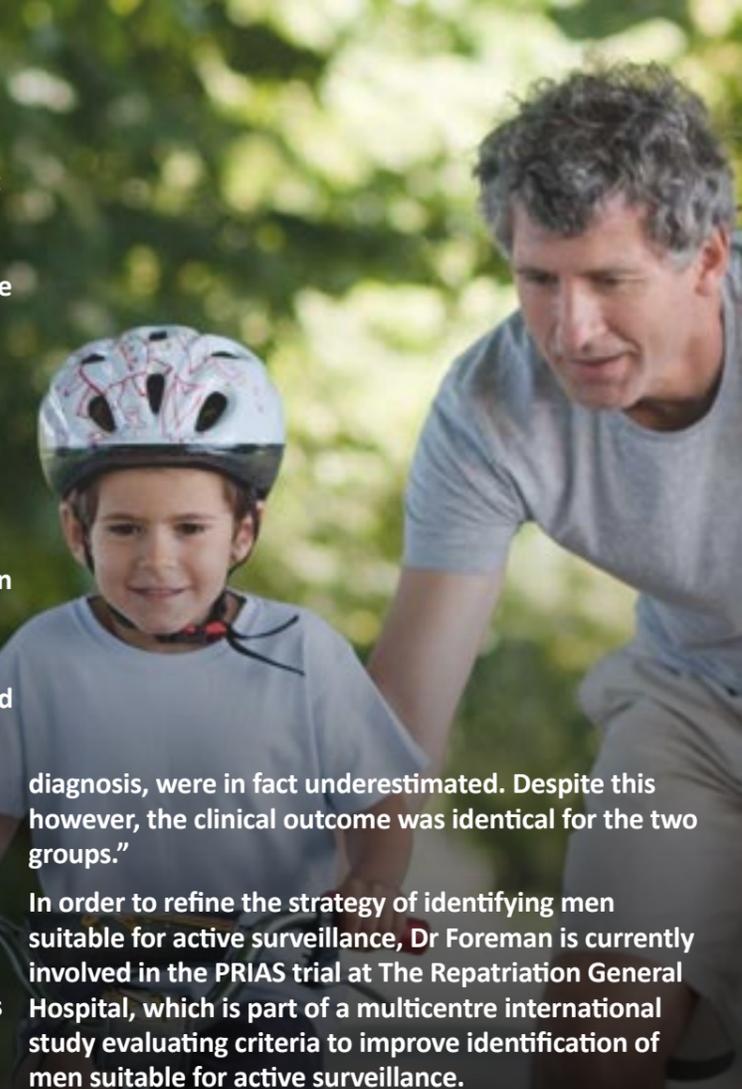
"We follow these patients with regular PSA tests, clinical monitoring of their prostate, and appropriate imaging, and if there is any sign their disease is progressing we proceed with active treatment."

Dr Foreman explains the side effects of curative treatments for prostate cancer may result in a decreased quality of life for patients, including incontinence and impotence. His study is evaluating whether a period of observation is safe in men with low risk prostate cancer.

"Our study involves comparing the pathological outcomes of a group of men who began on active surveillance and progressed to treatment, with a group who immediately proceeded to treatment after diagnosis with similar disease characteristics.

"We actually found there was a higher proportion of men whose cancer was spreading outside the prostate in the active surveillance group.

"Our results have identified that a significant number of men who appeared to have a less aggressive cancer at



diagnosis, were in fact underestimated. Despite this however, the clinical outcome was identical for the two groups."

In order to refine the strategy of identifying men suitable for active surveillance, Dr Foreman is currently involved in the PRIAS trial at The Repatriation General Hospital, which is part of a multicentre international study evaluating criteria to improve identification of men suitable for active surveillance.

Grateful to community support which has allowed the continuation of his research, Dr Foreman is confident the future will lead to prostate cancer patients making better informed decisions about their own treatment options.

Read more about this research at: [www.ausprostatecancer.com.au](http://www.ausprostatecancer.com.au).

## The Longest Table is Back! Do you want to Fork Cancer?!

In the time you have friends over for dinner, 56 Australians are diagnosed with cancer. The Longest Table wants to stop this. It's fun, simple and lifesaving!

In 2015, The Longest Table raised a magnificent total of \$150,000 for cancer research – thank you to everyone who got involved by being a host, attending a dinner or making a donation.

As a beneficiary of The Longest Table, Australian Prostate Cancer is gearing up for 2016 to be bigger and better than ever! Mark in your diaries Saturday 18 June 2016 as the official date for the next Longest Table event!

Register your interest to join the The Longest Table family via our website: [www.thelongesttable.com.au](http://www.thelongesttable.com.au).

**We can't wait to Fork Cancer with you!**



## Fundraise for us!

Hosting your own fundraising event is not only a lot of fun, but gives you the chance to give back and support vital research into prostate cancer. The way you choose to fundraise is entirely up to you, but here are a few ideas to get you thinking!

- Quiz Night
- Workplace Casual Day
- Fun Run
- Garage Sale

If you like the sound of hosting your own event, please contact us on (08) 8243 1101 or email us at [events@ausprostatecancer.com.au](mailto:events@ausprostatecancer.com.au).

**We would love to hear from you!**



QLD Oncology Nurses ran the City 2 Surf to raise money for prostate cancer research in 2015.

**Your  
donation  
will:**

**\$ Improve prostate cancer testing**



**\$ Improve treatments**



**\$ Stop prostate cancer**



## APC's Healthy Meatless Recipe!

It's very important to maintain a healthy balanced diet, particularly when it comes to looking after your prostate. Why not try cutting out red meat one night a week and replacing it with a nice vegetarian meal. We have a delicious meatless recipe to get you started!

### Roast Carrot and Bean Salad with Feta

- 1kg baby carrots
- Few lemon thyme sprigs (optional)
- 2tbsp olive oil
- 175g green beans, topped and halved
- 400g cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 small red onion, halved and finely sliced
- 200g feta cheese, crumbled
- Small bunch of mint

1. Heat oven to 220 degrees Celsius. Put the carrots into a large roasting tin, toss with the lemon thyme (if using) and half the oil, then season well. Roast for about 30 mins until golden, turning halfway through cooking.

2. Meanwhile, cook the green beans in boiling water for 2 mins. Drain, cool under cold running water, and then drain again. Mix together the green beans, cannellini beans, remaining oil, onion and feta, then season to taste. Toss with the hot carrots, and then tear in the mint just before serving. *Recipe courtesy of BBC Good Food*

**Follow our Meatless Mondays by liking us on Facebook!**

## CONTACT US

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