

“Give a toss” for prostate cancer campaign

Need for new markers for prostate cancer

There is no question that there has been a revolution over the past 20 years in the management of prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is now being diagnosed and treated earlier and as a result many more men have become cancer survivors. PSA has played a significant role in these changes with many men now being alive because of PSA testing.

Although PSA is an excellent marker for prostate cancer as with all good things there are problems with this test. PSA is not only elevated in men with prostate cancer, but is also elevated in men with enlarged prostates and those men with inflammation of the prostate. PSA alone is not enough to make the diagnosis of prostate cancer: to make the diagnosis a prostate biopsy is required. In addition, PSA does not tell us if the prostate cancer is aggressive or not. In other words, PSA doesn't tell us if you will die with or because of the disease.

The development of new, more specific and sensitive biomarkers for prostate cancer is critical to improve survival (identify men early who would benefit from aggressive therapy) and reduce morbidity (treat only men who are likely to benefit from therapy).

“Give a toss” for prostate cancer campaign: Prostate cancer markers in semen

Our goal is to find new markers for prostate cancer to help doctors detect cancer earlier. **Why are we studying semen?** Over ¼ of the fluid in the semen comes from the prostate. Because the prostate markers are more abundant in the semen, we believe that it will be much easier to find these markers in the semen than in the blood or the urine. In fact, PSA, is highly abundant in the semen and was initially found in the semen. We hypothesize that other potential prostate cancer biomarkers will also appear with greater abundance in the semen than in the blood or urine and that they can be isolated and characterized.

What have we found to date?

We have already discovered several new markers for prostate cancer in the semen. Some of these markers may help us to prove men have prostate cancer (avoiding the need for a biopsy of the prostate), and also help to find the men with the more aggressive types of prostate cancer (these are the men who need treatment early).

How can you help?

We now need to confirm that the markers we have discovered for prostate cancer are accurate. To do this, we need a study on a larger group of men with and without prostate cancer. If you are between the ages of 40-80 and you are able to “donate” a semen sample, we would like to ask you to participate in this study. It is our **“give a toss” for prostate cancer campaign**. It doesn't matter if you have or don't have prostate cancer, as long as you can **“give a toss”** we would like you to participate.

To participate e-mail prostate@mtsinai.on.ca or call Susan Lau at 416-586-4800 ext 5375

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