



## UROLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

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### **New study reveals Australian men under-diagnosed with prostate cancer**

A landmark Australian study into prostate cancer diagnosis suggests Australian men are being under-diagnosed and under-treated for prostate cancer.

The study, *Prostate biopsy in Western Australia 1998 - 2004* to be published in **Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases (Nature Publishing Group)**, looked at 5146 West Australian men undergoing initial prostate biopsy after a PSA blood test between 1998 and 2004, and revealed men were more likely than not to be diagnosed with cancer.

The 59% detection rate for initial biopsies, and 32% for repeat biopsies is almost double the rate in US studies and suggests urological practice in WA was significantly more conservative than US practice over this time period.

Of those diagnosed, 69% and 38% of tumours diagnosed on initial and repeat biopsy, respectively, were high-grade cancers.

The rates of cancer diagnosis and detection of high-grade tumours were both 1.6-fold higher in WA patients compared with those in the United States.

“This study reveals we are not over-diagnosing insignificant cancers or unnecessarily referring men for biopsies,” says Dr David Malouf, president of the peak body for urological surgeons, the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ).

“In fact this study suggests we may in fact be under-diagnosing prostate cancer in Australia with GPs, in some instances, delaying the referral of patients with elevated PSAs for assessment, potentially affecting outcomes given that the early treatment of prostate cancer leads to higher cure rates and better quality of life outcomes,” says Dr Malouf.

The study's authors say the application of multiple factors in determining the need for biopsy in the Australian setting (PSA level, PSA velocity, age-related PSA, rectal findings) results in the detection of significant cancers in the majority of cases.

"However, the study showed many cancers are detected too late for surgery with cancer often beyond the prostate confines when surgery is undertaken," says Dr Malouf.

"I am concerned GPs have the perception that prostate cancer is not a serious cancer and this is leading to delayed investigation and treatment where appropriate."

"These findings is highly relevant given the recent publicity debates on over-diagnosis associated with PSA screening following publication of mortality trends in overseas' trials," says Dr Malouf.

"USANZ recommends Australian men have a PSA test in conjunction with a physical examination from the age of 40 years as the best precaution against dying from prostate cancer, which kills as many men in Australia each year as breast cancer kills women," says Dr Malouf.

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**To interview Dr David Malouf, please contact:**

**Edwina Gatenby, Maxicom Public Relations, ph 02 9965 9302 or mob. 0402 130 254**