Prostate Cancer Essay, Research Paper

Introduction

Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancer in men over 50. This cancer is a serious disease, it rates the second leading cause of death in men, which means the symptoms remain hidden until men get older and they are able to recognize them. There are many ways to treat this kind of cancer but doctors can not insure patients that the cancer will fully go away at once. Since prostate cancer is a part of the males reproductive system it can cause problems with urinating and ejaculating. According to Charles Henderson (1998) ” Osteoporosis is associated with hypogonadism, and servere bone loss occurs following orchidectomy for prostate cancer”. There are also many ways in diagnosing prostate cancer, even before symptoms may start to show. There is no positive way to prevent prostate cancer but studies have suggested that having a low-fat diet will decrease your chances or risks of getting it. The following will present a understanding and overview of prostate cancer and the related subjects.

What is Prostate Cancer

The prostate is a gland about the size of a walnut, which produces semen. It is located in the front of the rectum, behind the penis, and under the bladder. The cancer develops from the cells of the prostate gland, and sometimes the cells may spread out to other parts of the body. Most prostate cancer grows slowly which makes it harder to find in younger males. From it being a part of the reproductive track it can result in the penis not functioning right, called impotence.

The cancer may grow to block the bladder which then makes patients unable to urinate. If it grows into the bladder neck and blocks the urters this will cause a kidney failure. The symptoms include , need to urinate frequently (usually at night), difficulty in starting to urinate, inability to urinate, burning when urinating, painful ejaculation, blood in urine or semen, or frequent pain or stiffness in the lower back, hips, or upper thighs. Also along with this cancer the person can lose his appetite, weight, desire for sex, and the desire to live.

Causes

There is no positive explanation of what causes prostate cancer, but it is believed that the bodies hormones are changed or increased in some way. Researchers have also found many things that are included with the higher risk of developing this disease. If you are over the age of 50 your chances will increase, if you are an African-American it is found to be twice as common, and it’s mostly common in North America. Other influences some studies have suggested men that eat more fat and less fruit and vegetables will increase their risks. Their physical activity, having a healthy weight may help reduce their risk in developing prostate cancer. Finally prostate cancer seems to run in family’s, it is inherited and will make you at higher risk at having this cancer. All these examples could be causes but again no one no’s for sure the cause of prostate cancer.

How Prostate Cancer is Diagnosed

Many patients after symptoms have occur, get diagnosed at an older age. But it can also be diagnosed without symptoms at a younger age. One is the Digital Rectum exam, here the doctor inserts a finger into the rectum and feels the prostate through the rectal wall to check for lumps. Blood tests, the patients blood is drawn and that measures of the prostates specific protein and acids in the blood. Another way is the urine test which is checked for blood or infections. There is the transrectal ultrasonography, when a probe is put into the rectum and it will send ultrasound waves to a computer, that bounce off the prostate. Those echo’s are looked at by the computer to show the picture of the prostate. The intravenous pylegram is a number of x-rays of the organs of the urinary tract. There is also a cystoscopy in which the doctor looks into the tube that carries urine out of the body and the bladder through a thin lighted tube. Or you may have a biopsy, if the cancer is suspected by one of the tests, and they wil remove a small piece of the tissue from the prostate. The biopsy is the only way to know for sure that the prostate gland have the cancer cell.

If prostate cancer is found after the biopsy it will be graded to how fast it is likely to grow and spread. This is done by taking a sample of the biopsy, and then they grade it accordingly to how close it is to looking like a normal prostate cell. The most common grading system is the Gleason system, ranging from 1-10. In this system 2 to 4 is the lower stages, 5-6 is the intermediate stages, and 7-10 are considered the higher stages. According to Harvard Health Publications Group (2000) a Gleason score is based on a pathologist’s examination of extract prostate tissue. The higher the Gleason score, more advanced the cancer.

Treatments

After patients have been diagnosed they still have to go through more testing to have the prostate cancer staged. After the cancer is staged then doctors can decide what kind of treatment is best appropriate. In staging they use a variety of different procedures. They go though CAT scans, MRI’s which will show abnormal areas if the cancer spread to the bones, radionuclide bone scan, prostascint scan (radioactive material used again to look at bones), lymph nude biopsy, and TNM staging system which will then tell how serious the cancer has spread.

The treatments that can be used is surgery to remove the entire prostate. This is the most common treatment performed in early staged cancer. Radiation therapy is another way, done in early stages and can be used after surgery to kill all the left over cancer cells. Radiation therapy uses energy rays to stop the cancer cells from growing. Robert S. Gould (1999) states that the major side effect of radial surgery is incontinence (loss of control of the urine) which can be seen between 10 and 40% of patients. The probability of maintaining erectile functioning after radiotherapy is 0.69.The probability after surgery is 0.42 (Charles Henderson 1997). Hormone therapy limits the growth of the cancer cells by stopping them from getting the hormones they need.

Yet there is another treatment which is considered the most effective which is Cryosurgery. This is not as major as the others might be and is will cause less discomfort. It involves 5 needles that go into the prostate, then liquid nitrogen will come out and freeze off all the cancer. This treatment is more effective than radial therapy because the freezing goes beyond the spreading of the cancer and most all patients will get rid of all the cancer as in radial therapy only a half of the patients will be cured.

The pain to these surgeries vary depending on how serious the cancer is and what surgery they decide to perform on people. Pain response was prospectively defined as a 3 point reduction in nightly worst pain with stable or reduced opiate score or a 33% decrease with reduced or stable pain (Charles Henderson 1999). These results show that the pain made an improvement and progressed as time went on.

Affect on the person

To the male it is going to affect both himself and his wife, seeing that it has to do with the reproductive system. They have to share their fears, questions, doubt, and decisions that will make them feel the best about the situation no matter how it turns out. They have to have full support of other family members and let them know you are there for them. The worst affect that can come out of this cancer is their sexual performance which if a big part of reproducing in life. This can cause depression that they will eventually have to overcome with the help of others. As for the Harvard health Publications Group (2000) “the prostate gland makes most of the fluid of the ejaculate. If you remove the gland then you are removing a body part that makes fluid. So men with potency after prostatectomy have dry orgasms. But orgasm is a central nervous system event, si it doesn’t interfere that much with the most important part of the sexual experience.”

Conclusion

Prostate cancer is the cancer of the prostate gland that can impact many men, young or old, in everyday life. You can die from this cancer if it left unattended and therefore every male should be informed on the symptoms and get checked every so often so it does not result in something to serious. There are many ways and treatment for prostate cancer, they can be rough or the procedures can be simple. There is no way to prevent this cancer and it can change a man’s life drastically if it is in the worst case. There are different levels of this cancer an if someone does develop it they need all the support they can get.