

# PROSTATE CANCER IN LATIN AMERICA



## PROSTATE CANCER: HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

### *What You Need to Know*

Here are the **TEN** things **every person in Belize** should know about prostate cancer:

- About 50 men in Belize will be diagnosed with prostate cancer this year — **and about half of them will die of this disease.**
- **Only men** can get prostate cancer. **Women can not get prostate cancer**, because they do not have a prostate
- If a man's father, grandfather, uncle or brother has or had prostate cancer, then he is at greater risk than most men.
- Men of Black African ethnicity **seem** to be at a higher risk for prostate cancer than White men and men of other origins, but we don't know why.
- **In its earliest and most curable stages, prostate cancer has no symptoms at all.**
- The key to the effective management of prostate cancer is **early detection**, using regular physical exams and simple blood tests called PSA tests.
- Many men, particularly older men, with early stages of prostate cancer, may **never need to be treated at all.**
- There are several ways to treat early stage prostate cancer, and they all have similar results.
- Every form of treatment for prostate cancer has some serious risks and some serious possible side effects.
- For any specific type of treatment, doctors with extensive experience using that treatment technique can reduce the patient's risk for complications.

### *What is Prostate Cancer?*

- Prostate cancer starts in the prostate, a walnut-sized gland found below the bladder.
- If it isn't treated, prostate cancer follows a natural course, starting as a tiny group of cancer cells that can grow into a full-blown tumor.
- In some men, prostate cancer that isn't treated can spread ("metastasize") and cause death.

### *Can Prostate Cancer be Prevented?*

- We know of no sure way to prevent a man from getting prostate cancer today.
- A drug called finasteride can prevent development of prostate cancer in some men. However, its use is still considered controversial by many doctors.

### *Who is at Risk?*

- About 25 men in Belize currently die of prostate cancer each year.
- It is one of the most common cancers in men.
- Prostate cancer is more common in older men.

### *What Can You Do About It?*

- Regular physical exams and a simple blood test (called a PSA test) are the keys to early diagnosis.
- You can start having regular physical exams and PSA tests in your mid 40s.
- If you have a family history of prostate cancer, you should start having regular tests earlier.
- Early diagnosis will allow you to have early treatment, if this is necessary.
- If prostate cancer is diagnosed and treated early, then your risk of dying from this illness is small.
- If prostate cancer is diagnosed late (when it has spread to other parts of the body), then prostate cancer cannot be cured.