Diabetes Discourse

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Quarterly Newsletter of the Bovell Cancer Diabetes Foundation (BCDF)

This Free Newsletter is a Vital Resource for Diabetes Prevention and for anyone Living with Diabetes

Our Vision

- Enriching lives, one person at a time

Our Mission

- To enrich the lives of people living with or at risk for cancer and diabetes by providing financial resources, support, preventive and management education.

BCDF Activities Include:

- Modest grants to individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes to enhance their quality of life
- Prevention and management education, and small-group workshops
- Advocacy and referrals to resources for individuals/families affected by cancer or diabetes
- Writing grant proposals and fundraising

BCDF relies on donations to carry out its mission. We are an incorporated, charitable Foundation in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. BCDF functions with volunteers only and no paid staff.

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Inside This Issue

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CANCER BASICS

Cancer is a large group of diseases that can start in almost any organ or tissue of the body when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably, go beyond their usual boundaries to invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs. The latter process is called metastasizing and is a major cause of death from cancer. A neoplasm and malignant tumour are other common names for cancer.

Key Facts

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide. The most common cancers are breast, lung, colon and rectum and prostate cancers. But there are more than 100 cancer types and subtypes. Around 33% of deaths from cancer are due to tobacco use, high body mass index, alcohol consumption, low fruit and vegetable intake, and lack of physical activity. Infections, which are cancer-causing, such as human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis, are responsible for

Go to page 3

PROSTATE CANCER

What is the prostate?

The prostate is a walnut sized gland found between the bladder and the penis. Prostate cancer begins when cells in the prostate gland begins to grow out of control.

Facts

- The most common type of cancer in males
- The chance of developing prostate cancer increases as men age
- The risk of developing prostate cancer is higher in black men than men of other ethnicity
- Black men are twice more likely to die from prostate cancer as it tends to be more severe
- Routine prostate screening can help with early detection and as a result, prevent cancer from spreading

Symptoms

Advanced Stage

- Trouble starting urination
- Weak urine flow
- Need to urinate often, especially at night
- Bladder not emptying completely
- Pain or burning while urinating
- Blood in the urine or semen
- Painful ejaculation

When It Has Spread

- Bone and back pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain in the testicles
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme tiredness

Risk

There are three well-established risk factors for prostate cancer:

- Older age
- Family history (including genetics)

Go to page 3

OF OUR BELOVED BROTHER

Cornelius "Corni" Henson Bovell 1948-2014

Beloved Brother
Our hearts still ache in sadness,
and secret tears still flow,
what it meant to lose you,
no one will ever know

From your sisters, brothers, neices, nephews & your BCDF Family

From page 2...Prostate Cancer

- Black race
- As men age, their risk for prostate cancer increases considerably. About 60% of prostate cancer is diagnosed in men over age 65
- It is important talking with your doctor about Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) screening for prostate cancer as you enter middle age
- Genes for disease can run in families. Of all the major cancers, prostate cancer is the most heritable: 58% of prostate cancer is driven by genetic factors
- Men who have a close relative with prostate cancer may be twice as likely to develop the disease, while those with 2 or more relatives may be nearly 4 times as likely to be diagnosed. The risk is higher if the affected family members were diagnosed before age 60
- Other risk factors for prostate cancer diagnosis and worse outcomes are social and environmental factors
  - Particularly a diet that is low in vegetables and high in processed meat and saturated fat—and lifestyle
  - Men who are overweight or obese are at greater risk of developing an aggressive form of prostate cancer

Screenings for Prostate Cancer

1. Prostate Cancer Antigen Gene 3 (PCA3)– a urine test used to determine your risk of cancer
2. Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA)- a blood test that is used to detect prostate cancer
3. Digital Rectal Exam (DRE)- a doctor uses a gloved, lubricated finger in the rectum to feel for any lump or hard areas on the prostrate

Men with more than one close family member who had prostate cancer before 65 should begin screening at age 40 and those whose father or brother was diagnosed, should begin screening at 45.

Reprinted from:

https://caribcan.org/2022/02/11/screenings-for-prostate-cancer/
https://www.pcf.org/patient-resources/family-cancer-risk/prostate-cancer-risk-factors/

From page 1

30% of cancer cases in developing countries. Many cancers can be cured if detected early and treated effectively.

Causes

Cancer arises from the transformation of normal cells into tumour cells in a multi-stage process that generally progresses from a pre-cancerous lesion to a malignant tumour. These changes are the result of the interaction between a person's genetic factors and three categories of external agents, including:

1. Physical carcinogens, such as ultraviolet and ionizing radiation:
2. Chemical carcinogens, such as asbestos, components of tobacco smoke, alcohol, aflatoxin (a food contaminant), and arsenic (a drinking water contaminant)
3. Biological carcinogens, such as infections from certain viruses, bacteria, or parasites

The incidence of cancer rises dramatically with age, most likely due to a build-up of risks for specific cancers that increase with age. The overall risk accumulation is combined with the tendency for cellular repair mechanisms to be less effective as a person grows older.

Risk Factors for Preventable Cancers

Cigarette Smoking & Secondhand Smoking Exposure: Smoking causes lung cancer, cancer of the voice box (larynx), mouth and throat, esophagus, urinary bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, colon, rectum, liver, and stomach, as well as a type of blood cancer called acute myeloid leukemia.

Overweigh and Obesity

Overweight and obesity are associated with at least 13 different types of cancer, including endometrial (uterine) cancer, breast cancer in postmenopausal women, and colorectal cancer.

Excessive Alcohol Use

Excessive alcohol use, either in the form of binge drinking (5 or more drinks on an occasion for men or 4 or more drinks on an occasion for women) or heavy drinking (15 or

more drinks per week for men or 8 or more drinks per week for women), increases the risk of cancer of the breast (in women), liver, colon, rectum, mouth, pharynx, larynx, and esophagus. For some types of cancer, the risk increases even at low levels of alcohol consumption (less than 1 drink in a day). The less alcohol you drink, the lower your risk for cancer.

Infectious Diseases

Human papillomavirus (HPV) causes most cervical cancers, as well as some cancers of the vagina, vulva, penis, anus, and oropharynx (cancers of the back of the throat, including the base of the tongue and tonsils). The HPV vaccine helps prevent most of these cancers. It is most effective when given in two doses about 6 to 12 months apart, starting at age 11 or 12. Many liver cancer cases are related to the hepatitis B or hepatitis C viruses. The hepatitis B vaccine is a safe and effective way to lower liver cancer risk. The vaccine is recommended for all infants and unvaccinated children and some groups of unvaccinated adults. While there is no vaccine for hepatitis C, there is a safe and effective treatment that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent further liver damage.

Skin Cancer and Tanning Beds

Skin cancer is not a common cancer type in Trinidad and Tobago. Most cases of melanoma, the deadliest kind of skin cancer, are caused by exposure to UV light from the sun or tanning beds.

Unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and air pollution

Are risk factors for cancer and other noncommunicable diseases

Screening to Prevent or Catch Cancer Early

Cancer risk can be reduced by:

- ✓ Not using tobacco
- ✓ Maintaining a healthy body weight
- ✓ Eating a healthy diet, including fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Doing physical activity on a regular basis
- ✓ Avoiding or reducing consumption of alcohol
- ✓ Getting vaccinated against HPV and hepatitis B if you belong to a group for which vaccination is recommended
- ✓ Avoiding ultraviolet radiation exposure (which primarily results from exposure to the sun and artificial tanning devices) and/or using sun protection measures
- ✓ Ensuring safe and appropriate use of radiation in health care (for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes)
- ✓ Minimizing occupational exposure to ionizing radiation
- ✓ Reducing exposure to outdoor air pollution and indoor air pollution, including radon (a radioactive gas produced from the natural decay of uranium, which can accumulate in buildings — homes, schools, and workplaces).

- Getting recommended screening tests can help prevent colorectal and cervical cancers. Screening for adults at normal risk can also find breast, cervical, and colon cancers early, when treatment works best. Lung cancer screening is recommended for adults who smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years, have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history, and are between 50 and 80 years old.

Reprinted from:

https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer
https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/factsheets/cancer.htm

PANCREATIC CANCER

Our children's perspective of the pancreas

Pancreatic cancer forms in the cells of the pancreas. The pancreas is the pear-shaped organ located behind the stomach. The function of the pancreas is to:

- Produce enzymes that help digest your food
- Make hormones such as insulin and glucagon, which help control your blood sugar levels

Types of Pancreatic Cancer

There are two types of pancreatic cancer. The most common type develops in the cells that make digestive enzymes. This is called pancreatic exocrine cancer and makes up more than 95% of all cancers of the pancreas. The other type of cancer develops in the cells responsible for making hormones, including the ones that help manage blood sugar. This type is called pancreatic endocrine cancer and makes up less than 5% of all pancreatic cancers.

Risk Factors for Pancreatic Cancer

The exact causes of pancreatic cancer are not known. However, there are some environmental and genetic factors that may increase your chances of developing cancer. These include:

- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Chronic inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis)
- Liver damage
- Family history of pancreatic cancer
- Sixty-five years of age or older
- Family history of certain genetic disorders that have been linked to this type of cancer (e.g. Lynch syndrome)

Signs and Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of pancreatic cancer often do not occur until the disease is advanced. These may include:

- Pain in the back or belly
- Light-coloured and/or greasy stools
- Dark-coloured urine
- Yellowing of your skin and the whites of your eyes (jaundice)
- Loss of appetite or unintended weight loss
- Itchy skin
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- New diagnosis of diabetes or existing diabetes that is becoming more difficult to control

Diagnosis

These tests can include:

- Blood tests
- Scans, like an ultrasound (sometimes from inside your body using an endoscope), CT scan, PET scan, or MRI scan
- Biopsy: the removal of a small sample of cells from the pancreas (to be checked for cancer)
- Laparoscopy which is a small operation to look inside your tummy

Prevention Tips

Although you can inherit genes that increase your risk for pancreatic cancer, you can make lifestyle changes to help reduce your risk. You can:

Choose a healthy diet. A diet full of colorful fruits and vegetables and whole grains may help reduce your risk of cancer.

Maintain or aim for a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese is a leading risk factor for several types of cancer.

Stop smoking if you smoke. Smoking increases your risk for several types of cancer, including pancreatic cancer.

Avoid or reduce alcohol intake. Heavy drinking may increase your risk for chronic pancreatitis and possibly pancreatic cancer.

Reprinted from:
https://caribcan.org/2022/01/09/pancreatic-cancer-prevention/

Make a Donation to BCDF to stamp out Diabetes

WHAT IS BREAST CANCER?

Breast cancer is cancer that starts in the breast. It starts when cells in the breast begin to grow out of control. It can start in one or both breasts. Breast cancer cells usually form a tumor that can often be seen on a mammogram or ultrasound or felt as a lump. Breast cancer is most common in women, but men also can get breast cancer. Breast cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body and grow there, too. When cancer cells do this, it is called metastasis. Cancer is named for the place where it starts. So even if breast cancer spreads to the bones (or any other place), it's still called breast cancer. It's not called bone cancer unless it starts from cells in the bone.

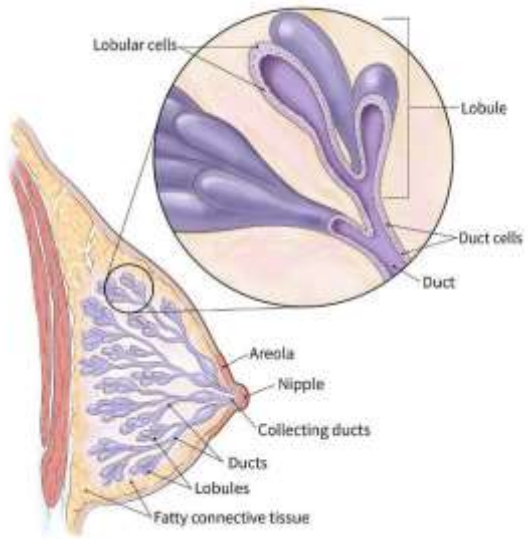
Are there different kinds of breast cancer?

There are many types of breast cancer. Some are very rare. Your doctor can tell you more about the type you have. Below are the medical names for the most common types of breast cancer. (Carcinoma is another name for cancer.)

Ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS)

DCIS is very early breast cancer. In DCIS, the cancer cells are only inside the milk ducts. (Ducts are the tiny tubes that carry milk to the nipple). The cancer cells have not spread through the walls of the ducts into the nearby breast tissue. Nearly all women with DCIS can be cured.

The Breast



Invasive breast cancer

Invasive breast cancer means the cancer has grown outside the place it started (for example, a milk duct or milk gland) and is invading (growing into) nearby breast tissue. These cancers might also spread to other places in the body. Most invasive breast cancers are one of these types:

- ✓ Invasive ductal carcinoma (IDC): This is the most common type of breast cancer. It starts in a milk duct of the breast and grows through the wall of the duct into the nearby breast tissue.
- ✓ Invasive lobular carcinoma (ILC): This type of cancer starts in the milk glands, called lobules, and grows into the nearby breast tissue.

Inflammatory breast cancer (IBC)

In IBC, cancer cells block lymph vessels in the skin. IBC makes the skin of the breast look red and feel warm. The skin can also look thick and pitted – kind of like an orange peel. The breast may get bigger, harder, tender, or itchy. Many times there is no lump felt with IBC. Because there's no lump, IBC might not show up on a mammogram. This can make it harder to find IBC early. It is more likely to spread and is harder to cure than invasive ductal or lobular cancer.

Triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC)

TNBC is invasive breast cancer that certain types of treatment would not work on. It is TNBC because the cancer cells are missing three proteins that breast cancers are tested for: estrogen and progesterone receptors, which help cells respond to hormones, and a protein called HER2, which other types of breast cancer make too much of.

Some questions to ask the doctor

- ✓ Why do you think I have cancer?
- ✓ Is there a chance I do not have cancer?
- ✓ Would you please write down the kind of cancer you think I might have?
- ✓ What will happen next?

Reprinted from: www.cancer.org