

Press Release

To: News/ Health Assignment Editors

For immediate release

**Local Men Lack Knowledge of Prostate Cancer
Men Should Be Aware of Warning Signs
Cancer Fund Launches FIRST Free, Community-based Prostate
Cancer Care and Rehabilitation Service**

(Hong Kong, 29 October 2013)

Prostate Cancer is the 3rd commonest male cancer in Hong Kong, with 1,500 new diagnoses every year. It claims approximately 300 lives annually. In order to find out about prostate cancer awareness among local men, Hong Kong Cancer Fund (HKCF) commissioned the Public Opinion Programme (POP) at the University of Hong Kong to conduct a phone survey of over 1,000 local males aged 40-70. The results reveal a lack of awareness on prostate health and the threat of prostate cancer. It also finds that many respondents do not think it necessary to seek medical advice even when experiencing urinary symptoms.

Local men know little about the prostate

Key findings from the survey, conducted between August and September, reveal that over half of respondents (55%) do not know the function of the prostate. Almost 30% of men mistakenly think it is involved in urination; only 14% correctly state the role of the prostate in reproduction (production of semen). Most worryingly, over 60% of men believe they will not suffer from prostate cancer in their lifetime.

Males overlook the importance of prostate checks

The survey also looked at self-reported urinary symptoms. Over half of the participants said they experienced at least one urinary symptom over the last 12 months. Older men between the ages of 60-70 made up two thirds of this group and the remaining third were aged 40-49. The most common reported symptoms were the inability to empty the bladder, passing urine more than usual and passing urine at

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night. Among those men with symptoms, over 70% of them did not want to visit a doctor and almost 75% had not received a prostate check of any kind. The most reported reason for this was that they do not think their symptoms are serious or they feel it unnecessary to visit a doctor. Even among all respondents, only 21% of them have undergone a prostate check because they believed they had a health problem.

Early prostate cancer can be asymptomatic

Dr Ho Lap Yin, Urologist and Medical Advisor to HKCF's Prostate Cancer Campaign, expressed his concern about the result. "The survey findings are quite worrying. They show that a lot of men in Hong Kong lack knowledge of prostate health and cancer. Most worrying is that a significant portion of men say they would not visit a doctor even if they are experiencing urinary symptoms, and that many men were against having prostate checks."

In general, males aged 50 or above have a higher chance of developing this disease, as the incidence increases with age. Since early stage prostate cancer can be asymptomatic, some people are already at a mid-/end-stage when they are diagnosed. To ensure early detection of disease, it is important for men to have regular prostate checks and to consult a doctor if they have concerns about their prostate health. According to current medical guidelines, men should start checking their Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) levels via a blood test regularly starting from 45-55 of age. Doctors may perform a digital rectal examination to check the size of prostate if deemed necessary. Dr Ho explained, "Males are advised to check their prostate function regularly, especially when they are over 50, to ensure early detection of the problem. With advances in treatment, the survival rate of early stage prostate cancer is high. There are also more treatment options available. The earlier a patient starts treatment, the lower the chance of them experiencing side effects such as erectile dysfunction. Early detection can also relieve the financial and emotional burden on a

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patient and their family.”

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First comprehensive community-based service for prostate cancer sufferers

The survey also revealed that, if diagnosed, men would turn to their family for support, with 76% choosing to talk to their spouse and 35% to their child/children. While almost 45% of them were unsure of the kind of assistance they would need, 21% of them believed emotional support would be beneficial.

Mrs. Sally Lo, Founder and Chief Executive of HKCF said, “Doctors can take care of the medical needs of patients, but emotional support from family members and a support network, is a very important part of the healing process. A lot of men find it hard to reach out for help but that doesn’t mean they do not need support. Cancer Fund is committed to helping make life better for men touched by prostate cancer and their families too. Increasing a cancer patient’s quality of life is an important part of this commitment, that is why we are proud to launch ‘Going Through’ - Hong Kong’s first free, comprehensive prostate cancer support service run in a community setting, that offers tailor-made programmes to meet the needs of male patients and their family members along every step of the cancer journey.”

Cancer Fund’s ‘Going Through’ project, offers a wide range of rehabilitation programmes run by a multidisciplinary team of social workers, nurses, clinical psychologists, sex therapist, dietitians, medical practitioners (Western and Chinese) and provides holistic care to prostate cancer patients and survivors.

Chris Ng, Social Worker of HKCF said, “This disease brings many unique physiological, emotional and social barriers. With our new project, we hope to cater to every aspect of a patient’s need, ultimately helping them restore their confidence, recover and look forward to life.”

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For the second year in a row, Cancer Fund is partnering with Movember, a worldwide initiative to raise funds and awareness about men's cancers by encouraging men to grow moustaches throughout the month of November. As their official health partner and beneficiary in Hong Kong, Movember is donating 35% the net of funds raised from its campaign to Cancer Fund. These funds will go towards supporting Going Through and enable Cancer Fund to continue to implement new survivorship programmes for men's cancer patients. The first of these programmes will provide Prostate Recovery Packs to newly diagnosed prostate cancer patients in hospitals. Each pack will contain information and support aids to alleviate discomfort and educate on the next step in their cancer journey, include information booklets, service leaflets, pelvic floor muscle exercise brochures and hotline information. Practical supplies enclosed include a sample diaper, water bottle and urinary sleeve to help battle the problems of incontinence that are prevalent with prostate cancer patients. For more information on Movember, please visit www.movember.com/hk/register/.

ENDS

Case Sharing

Raymond Ho

- **55 years old , retired civil servant**
- **Experienced severe back pain and hematuria between 2007 and 2010, with no other urinary symptoms**
- **In 2010, following a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test, he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Because his parents and 2 elder brothers passed away from cancer, doctors performed surgery quickly**
- **After diagnosis, Raymond was shocked, worried, and fearful of death. He started to think negatively and felt hopeless**

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- **He was annoyed and ashamed by his incontinence, and had poor self-esteem**
- **Learned about HKCF's CancerLink service through their website. At CancerLink he received both practical and emotional support which restored his confidence**
- **Raymond now volunteers for HKCF, providing telephone counselling to others prostate cancer sufferers**

Supplementary Information

Cancer Fund Rehabilitation Bag offered to all prostate cancer patients

Item	Purpose
Pamphlets & booklets	To equip patients with information on prostate cancer, our CancerLink support centres and on rehabilitation, treatment and support.
Water bottle	To remind patients to drink water regularly so as to alleviate and reduce dry mouth.
Diaper	This is an incontinence aid which absorbs mild urinary leakage. This disposable diaper needs to be changed regularly for hygiene purposes.
Cranberry juice	Cranberry juice is effective in preventing urinary tract infections (please consult a doctor if there are any signs and symptoms of infection. Those with diabetes, should check their suitability with a dietitian.)
Mild soap	Radiotherapy may make the treatment area of a patient's skin dry and itchy. Mild soap can be used to minimise skin reactions.

About Hong Kong Cancer Fund

Hong Kong Cancer Fund is Hong Kong's largest cancer support organisation, providing free information and professional support to anyone living with or affected by cancer. Our goal is to make life better for people touched by cancer. Our vision is

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to better the quality of cancer support in Hong Kong and ensure that no one faces cancer alone. Our work now encompasses public education, cancer research, home care, peer support, complementary therapies, funding of hospital equipment and much more in filling the gaps in cancer care and making life better for people touched by cancer. Website: www.cancer-fund.org °

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