

## INSIGHT



## ROBOTIC SURGERY

## Changing the surgical experience for men with localized prostate cancer



**Dr. Kevin C. Zorn, MDCM, FRCS, FACS**  
University of Montreal Hospital Center (CHUM), Director of CHUM Robotic Surgery Assistant Professor, Minimally Invasive and Robotic Uro-Oncologist

Upon the biopsy-diagnosis of prostate cancer, there are a multitude of therapeutic options for patients with early, organ-confined prostate cancer. These include 3 standard-of-care therapies - active surveillance; radical prostatectomy and radiation therapy. It is also important to note that, as with all medical and surgical treatments, there are side effects associated with the treatment of prostate cancer. Cancer recurrence, incontinence and impotence are the things that we strive to avoid but can occur in some patients.

Radical prostatectomy remains the standard treatment for long-term cure of clinically localized prostate cancer, offering excellent oncologic outcomes, with cancer-specific survival approaching 95% at 15 years after surgery. Although very few surgeons perform this procedure laparoscopically, the majority of Canadian urologists conduct surgery through an open, retroperic approach. In short, to the patient, this generally means a 3-5 day hospital stay and a catheter and recovery time of 14 days and 6-8 weeks, respectively.

### Robotic innovations

The introduction of the state-of-the-art da Vinci Robotic Surgical System has been another important step toward a minimally invasive approach to radical prostatectomy. The benefits of three-dimensional vision, wristed instrumentation with seven degrees of freedom of motion, lack of tremor, a 10x-magnification and a comfortable seated position for the surgeon has added value to the surgeon and patient. "da Vinci robotic surgery offers patients facing radical prostatectomy many potential benefits over traditional surgery, including significantly less pain, less blood loss and transfusions and fewer complications" says Dr. Kevin Zorn, Assistant Professor of Urology and Director of Robotic Surgery at the University of Montreal Hospital Center.

### Shorter recovery

He states that men following RARP should commonly expect a hospital stay <24 hours and a catheter and recovery time of 4-7 days and 2-4 weeks, respectively. "The procedure takes 2-3 hours under a general anesthesia and allows faster recovery and return to normal activities" says Dr. Zorn. Aside from reducing morbidity for Canadian men, it has also been described that, with experienced robotic surgeons, RARP yields lower positive surgical margins (PSM) rates and higher continence and potency rates. "75% of my patients are using either no-pads or 1 small security pad at 1 month after surgery" says Dr. Zorn. It is important to recognize however that surgeon experience and institutional volume of procedures strongly predict better outcomes in all relevant functional (erectile function and urinary control) and oncological domains.

### Changing lives

Ultimately, in the era of minimally invasive medicine, the da Vinci robot has changed the patient experience for surgical therapy for localized prostate cancer. Patients should discuss this option with their physician when evaluating treatment options for localized prostate cancer.

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# MOVING TREATMENT FORWARD WITH RAPID ACCESS CLINICS

FACT

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97% OF PATIENTS MOVE FORWARD TO LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



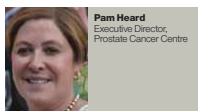
FEATURING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Charlie Huddy (former NHL defenseman), Doug Brown (former CFL player), Ed Johner and Shelly Glover (Member of Parliament for Saint Boniface in Winnipeg, Manitoba).

### ONE STOP SHOP

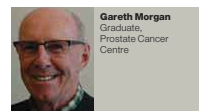
The Prostate Cancer Centre is a medical organization with a unique approach. It offers sufferers of prostate cancer the adequate care and attention that they require at each stage of their journey, from detection to aftercare.

Pam Heard, Executive Director at Prostate Cancer Centre, spoke of the advantages of such a structure. "We have been able to name all of our clinics as 'rapid access' because we have cut waiting times in half. If issues are recognized after a man has had an initial test he will be referred to a urologist. At most medical centres there is a three to six month waiting list for that referral. Here we have a waiting list of two weeks."

As well as offering detection, treatment and aftercare, Prostate Cancer Centre also equips men with all of the information that they need concerning their condition. "Once they hear that they need surgery it is usually up to the patient to go off and research possible treatments. Here we host a



**Pam Heard**  
Executive Director,  
Prostate Cancer Centre



**Gareth Morgan**  
Graduate,  
Prostate Cancer Centre

night, twice a month, where leading specialists come in and give patients all of the information that they could possibly need."

### PSA testing

Heard explained that detection is the most important factor in the fight against prostate cancer. "No man should die of prostate cancer. If caught early enough ninety nine percent of cases are curable."

She believes that men should be more aware of the ease at which they can have a PSA test: it is not a complex or invasive procedure. "It's a simple blood test; it's just like checking the oil in a car. Every man should have a PSA test at forty and then one every five years until he is fifty, after which, he should have a test once a year."

### The power of communication

At the Prostate Cancer Centre men who have had surgery and have been given the clear are not called survivors, they are called graduates. One such graduate is Gareth Morgan, a volunteer who sits on the board at Prostate Cancer Centre.

He believes that having graduates volunteering at the centre is a real benefit. "There is always someone here to take phone calls from men who may have recently been diagnosed. We all have different insights and experiences to share about prostate cancer. It is so important to speak to someone who has been through it."

This phone line is there for men to ask any questions that they might have about prostate cancer whether it be about PSA testing, surgery or

aftercare. Morgan said, "There is a list of volunteers that any man can phone up and talk to. Each volunteer has knowledge of a specific type of treatment, whether it be radiotherapy or cryosurgery."

### Taking it on the road

Morgan is part of an initiative called the Man Van, a mobile PSA testing unit that goes out onto the streets of Calgary and invites men in for a test. Morgan said, "Over the past three years we have tested over six thousand men. It's so simple and it only takes a few minutes. We then mail out the results or, if they have an abnormal reading, we call them. Either way, there is always a follow up."

The Man Van also aims to get men talking. "Sometimes guys don't want to talk about things below the belt but the more we talk about it, the better."

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## How does exercise affect prostate cancer?

### Exercising your options

You have probably heard that exercise can help to lower your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes, but did you know that exercise can also help decrease the risk of prostate cancer? In fact, exercise has been shown to benefit men with prostate cancer during all phases of the disease, by reducing the risk of prostate cancer, preserving and enhancing health during treatment, and improving overall survival.

### Decreasing your risks

First off, a growing body of research has examined the relationship between routine physical activity and prostate cancer; a majority of which have found that exercise may actually decrease

the risk of developing prostate cancer. Men may also benefit from initiating an exercise program following a diagnosis and prior to treatment. In other cancers, such as colon and lung cancer, pre-habilitation (that is, engaging in an exercise program before treatment), can actually improve recovery and reduce treatment-related complications. In fact, preliminary research has found that men with prostate cancer who perform pelvic floor muscle exercise before surgery can reduce urinary complications following prostate cancer surgery.

### Benefits of exercise

The evidence of benefit for men with prostate cancer is most apparent during treatments like radiation and hormone therapies. These treatments often

make men feel tired and reduce their overall physical fitness. During these treatments, exercise has been shown to improve strength, fatigue, cardiovascular fitness, and quality of life. Clearly, the role of exercise following a prostate cancer diagnosis is important for feelings of physical and emotional wellbeing, but recent research also suggests that it can increase survival as well.

### Moving forward

Overall, exercise has many benefits for men with prostate cancer. The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that persons with cancer "avoid inactivity" and work up to 150 minutes a week of aerobic activity (such as brisk walking) and incorporate strength training on 2

days or more per week. Working with an exercise specialist with experience in oncology can help prevent injuries and make sure that the exercises are safe. Men should talk to their physician prior to changing their exercise levels to ensure there is not any individual safety concern.

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