Manitoba Prostate Cancer SUPPORT GROUP

Newsletter

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Thanks!

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Speaker: Dr. Sean Ceaser ND
Naturopathic Doctor,
Centre For Natural Pain Solutions

Topic: "Naturopathic tools in management of prostate cancer"
(Have your questions answered in the Q&A)

Location: The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg, 603 Wellington Crescent, Winnipeg

Time: 7-9 pm

Free Admission Everyone Welcome Plenty of free parking Door Prizes

Thought of The Day

"It's not whether you get knocked down,
it's whether you get back up."

-Vince Lombardi

Researchers praise 'stunning' results of new prostate cancer treatment

Early trials of the drug VIR-5500 showed it shrinking tumours in some patients

A new drug for advanced prostate cancer has shown promise in early trials experts have said, with the medication shrinking tumours in some patients.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in many countries, including the US and UK. About 1.5 million men are diagnosed worldwide each year.

The new drug has caused excitement as it is a type of treatment called immunotherapy. This approach uses the body's own immune system to fight disease, and has already proved beneficial for some cancers. However, experts note it has not yet had the same impact on prostate cancer.

Now scientists have reported results from an early stage trial of an immunotherapy drug called VIR-5500, suggesting it could offer hope to men with advanced prostate cancer.

(Continued on page 2)

SHARING IS CARING

The Manitoba Prostate Cancer Support Group offers support to prostate cancer patients but does not recommend any particular treatment modalities, medications or physicians ; such decisions should be made in consultation with your doctor.

(Continued from page 1)

"We believe that such treatments may in the long term lead to cures," said Prof Johann de Bono of the Institute of Cancer Research and the Royal Marsden NHS foundation trust, who led the work.

De Bono said VIR-5500 was an engineered antibody that brought together the body's killer T-cells with tumour cells trying to evade them. This type of drug, called a T-cell engager, allowed the killer cells to wipe out the tumour ones.

The special feature of VIR-5500, De Bono added, was that it was designed to only become activated within the tumour. This not only minimised side-effects – an important consideration as other T-cell engagers have been found to trigger severe inflammatory responses in patients with prostate cancer – but allowed the drug to linger in the bloodstream, meaning fewer doses may be needed.

Under the phase one clinical trial, funded by Vir Biotechnology, 58 men with advanced prostate cancer, and who had stopped responding to other treatments, were given VIR-5500.

The researchers found the majority of patients – 88% – experienced only very mild side-effects.

They then looked at the level of prostate-specific antigen (PSA) in the men's blood – a biomarker whereby higher levels can be a sign of prostate conditions.

De Bono noted the trial started at low doses, with the dose increasing in stages. When the team looked at data for 17 men given the highest dose, they found that for 14 (82%) their PSA level fell by at least half after treatment, nine (53%) saw their PSA level fall by at least 90%, and five (29%) experienced a fall of at least 99%.

De Bono described the results as unprecedented for a disease previously thought to be "immune-cold" – in other words resistant to immunotherapy.

The team added that, of 11 patients given the highest dose and whose tumours were measurable, five showed tumour shrinkage. In one case, involving a 63-year-old man whose cancer had spread to his liver, the team found 14 cancerous liver lesions "completely resolved" after six cycles of treatment.

The results, which have not yet been peer-reviewed, were presented at the American Society of Clinical Oncology genitourinary cancers symposium in San Francisco.

De Bono said further clinical trials are now being planned. "We do need more data but the results are stunning," he said.

Charlotte Bevan, professor of cancer biology at Imperial College London, who was not involved in the work, said an advance in using immunotherapy for prostate cancer was potentially very exciting, opening up a new class of drug. But, she added, it was important studies were carried out with patients of different ethnicities, as there were disparities in prostate cancer outcomes.

Simon Grieveson, assistant director of research at Prostate Cancer UK, described the early-phase trial as exciting.

"With over 12,000 men dying from prostate cancer each year in the UK, we urgently need new and innovative ways to treat the disease," he said.

"These early results are extremely promising, with a number of men on the study responding positively to the treatment with minimal side effects. I look forward to seeing this now tested in larger trials, with the hope that this treatment will offer men more valuable time with their loved ones."

Nicola Davis Science correspondent

Sat 28 Feb 2026

Source: www.theguardian.com/society/2026/feb/28/researchers-praise-stunning-results-of-new-prostate-cancer-treatment

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Learning the basics about prostate cancer

As part of our outreach activity we provide speakers available to any community service group interested in learning about and upgrading their knowledge about prostate cancer. If you are part of a group that would like to learn, or review, the important basics that everyone should know about this disease, presented at an easy-to-understand layperson level, please contact any board member to schedule a presentation.
It takes about an hour and allows for active engagement between speaker(s) and audience to explore a variety of interests and concerns. There is no cost for this service. Size of the group doesn't matter, but the more the merrier. You provide the audience and we'll provide the speaker.

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Advanced prostate cancer: How exercise, support, and consistency improve quality of life

This video shows a patient's journey with prostate cancer, beginning with the diagnosis of an aggressive form of the disease and ongoing treatment at Mayo Clinic over eight years. Exercise and activity are crucial components at every stage, offering benefits for quality of life, muscle strength, and coping with potential disease progression, especially as cancer can affect the bones. The patient's physical therapist is also interviewed.

There are also emotional challenges associated with an advance prostate cancer diagnosis, including periods of depression and anxiety. The patient, Tim, emphasizes the importance of peer support and counseling for those new to their treatment journey. Patients may initially distrust their bodies, but with guidance and information, they can successfully adopt physical activity to improve their well-being.

Read the transcript:

[Jenny] When you work in cancer rehabilitation, we see patients at every step of their cancer journey. There is always something that can be done with exercise and activity that will improve quality of life.

When I first found out I had prostate cancer, and I had had my initial consultation with Mayo Clinic, I found out that not only did I have prostate cancer, but I had one of the most aggressive forms. And so that started my journey with Mayo, which I've been on for about eight years. As you look to the future with your treatment for prostate cancer, one of the things it can do is it can invade your bones, and so having a good muscle strength around your skeletal structure is going to help you as you age and with potential effects from the cancer progressing.

The best part of my job is giving people something that they can do to help in a situation where they don't feel like they're in control. Because we know that exercise has such a positive effect on outcomes from cancer treatment and also for survival advantage, we can always find something for people to do for fitness. Frequency is more important than duration or intensity, so you're better off doing moderate, smaller amounts more frequently to gain benefit and to gradually get stronger and more fit.

Regular exercise, consistent activity, and robust support systems dramatically improve quality of life for prostate cancer patients by reducing treatment side effects like fatigue, muscle loss, and anxiety. Consistent, moderate-intensity exercise (e.g., walking, resistance training) boosts physical strength, mental health, and may reduce cancer progression risk.

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305737225001185

[Tim] My exercise routine typically is composed of Pilates, which I do three days a week every other day, and then I do weightlifting four days a week.

Tim is a very hard worker. He's very consistent with his exercise program, and consistency is the key. It's everything.

Having a chronic disease or a even a terminal disease can radically change your life and your outlook on life. It's hard not to have some periods of depression or at least negative thinking. I do counsel men, there's people that have heard about what I'm going through and there's people that are behind me in their treatment journey, and they've still got shell shock. And so I can be a comfort to them. I can tell them, "Hey, don't stress out. Let's take this one day at a time. Here's what's helped me."

A lot of times, people are anxious about exercising, because they have had such a huge diagnosis that it's really scary, that they don't trust their body, they don't trust what's happened to their body, and they need someone to explain what has happened to their body and how their physical activity can improve that. I love meeting people in a place where they're ready for a change, and I can provide them the direction and the information that they need to make that change successfully.

April 9, 2026

By Mayo Clinic Press Editors

Source: https://mcpress.mayoclinic.org/advanced-prostate-cancer/advanced-prostate-cancer-how-exercise-support-and-consistency-improve-quality-of-life/

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Diabetes Drug Metformin May Mimic Exercise Benefits in Prostate Cancer

Key Takeaways

- ◊ Androgen-directed therapies can precipitate weight gain, insulin resistance, and cardiovascular risk, creating a clinical need for metabolic support when fatigue, pain, or toxicity limits exercise capacity.
- ◊ Elevations in Lac-Phe with metformin mirrored post-exertional physiology and were maintained after hormone therapy initiation, supporting Lac-Phe as a candidate biomarker of treatment-era metabolic adaptation.
- ◊ Lack of association between Lac-Phe and PSA kinetics suggests Lac-Phe reflects systemic energy balance rather than tumor response, reframing endpoints toward tolerability and long-term comorbidity mitigation.
- ◊ Divergent relationships of Lac-Phe and metformin-induced GDF-15 with weight change indicate multiple metabolic pathways may be engaged, with Lac-Phe potentially offering greater specificity for weight-related effects.
- ◊ Similar Lac-Phe increases seen with other metabolic therapies imply a broader class effect on exercise-associated metabolites, warranting mechanistic and prospective clinical validation.

Diabetes drug metformin may mimic exercise effects in prostate cancer, supporting weight, metabolism and overall health during treatment.

Researchers at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine reported in EMBO Molecular Medicine that metformin increased levels of a molecule associated with exercise in patients with prostate cancer, helping scientists better understand how metabolic health may be supported during treatment.

Why this matters for patients with prostate cancer

Many patients with prostate cancer receive hormone-based therapies. While these treatments are important, they can disrupt metabolism and contribute to weight gain, insulin resistance and increased cardiovascular risk. These changes can affect energy levels, daily well-being and long-term health.

Exercise can help regulate weight, blood sugar and heart health, but fatigue, pain, advanced disease and treatment side effects often make regular activity difficult. This study matters because it explores whether some of the biological signals usually activated by exercise can also be triggered by medication, potentially supporting patients' metabolic health when activity is limited.

What researchers found about Metformin and an exercise related molecule

Investigators focused on a molecule called N-lactoyl-phenylalanine, or Lac-Phe. This molecule is produced when lactate, which builds up during activity, combines with phenylalanine, a protein building block.

Previous research shows Lac-Phe rises after intense exercise and is associated with appetite regulation and weight control. In this study, patients treated with metformin had increased Lac-Phe levels, similar to levels seen after strenuous exercise. Importantly, patients were not exercising when blood was collected, and the effect continued after hormone therapy began.

"From a clinical standpoint, seeing a metabolic signal that mirrors what we associate with intense exercise was striking," said Dr. Marijo Bilusic, genitourinary medical oncologist at the Miller School. "For patients whose treatments or symptoms limit physical activity, that kind of effect could be especially meaningful."

Higher Lac-Phe levels were not linked to prostate-specific antigen changes, meaning the molecule does not appear to affect tumor response. Instead, it reflects how the body manages energy, weight and metabolic strain during treatment, which can affect daily life and long-term health.

Researchers also compared Lac-Phe with growth differentiation factor 15, or GDF-15, a stress hormone that rises with metformin. Lac-Phe was more closely tied to weight changes, suggesting metformin influences metabolism through multiple pathways.

"Metabolism is involved in everything cells do," said Dr. David Lombard, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine at the Miller School. "These findings suggest Lac-Phe may be a very informative signal for understanding how metformin affects metabolism in prostate cancer patients."

Trial details

The study was led by Drs. Priyamvada Rai, Bilusic and Lombard and included collaboration across Sylvester's Tumor Biology, Cancer Epigenetics and Translational and Clinical Oncology programs.

Researchers evaluated blood samples

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from patients receiving metformin and other metabolic therapies, measuring Lac-Phe levels and comparing them with prostate-specific antigen changes. While Lac-Phe increased, it was not linked to tumor response. Similar rises were seen in patients receiving other metabolic therapies, suggesting Lac-Phe may reflect a broader metabolic response.

Safety

The press release did not report side effects associated with metformin in this study.

Researchers emphasized that metformin is not a replacement for exercise. Instead, the study highlights a way to support metabolic health, which can influence how patients feel and tolerate treatment.

"Cancer therapy often affects the body in ways that go beyond the tumor," said Dr. Priyamvada Rai, professor of radiation oncology at the Miller School. "Supporting metabolic health can influence how patients tolerate treatment and how they feel over time, even if it doesn't directly change tumor growth."

References

"How a Diabetes Drug May Echo the Benefits of Exercise in Prostate Cancer Care" by Monica Smith, InventUM (University of Miami Miller School of Medicine).

Author: Quincy Attobrah

April 6, 2026

Source: www.curetoday.com/view/diabetes-drug-metformin-may-mimic-exercise-benefits-in-prostate-cancer

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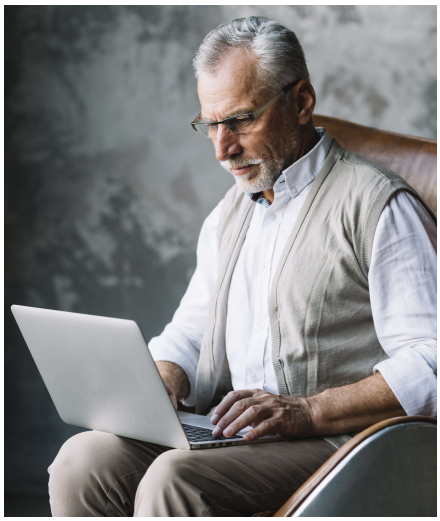
New study aims to guide prostate cancer patients through early treatment decisions

An upcoming clinical trial led by University of Texas at San Antonio (UT San Antonio) aims to help prostate cancer patients and their families make better-informed decisions earlier in the care process.

For more than 20 years, Lixin Song, PhD, RN, FAAN, vice dean for research and scholarship and professor of nursing at The University of Texas at San Antonio School of Nursing, has studied how cancer patients and their families navigate the challenging experience of making decisions about treatment while facing uncertainty, fear and a flood of medical information.



A multi-site clinical trial led by Song and funded through the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program through an Implementation Science Award of $2.8 million aims to help prostate cancer patients and their families make better-informed decisions earlier in the care process. The four-year project will evaluate an innovative mobile health intervention designed to improve communication between patients and providers while guiding patients through key stages of their cancer journey.

The study centers on the Support, Communication and Information Program for Prostate Cancer–Interactive (SCIPI), which uses artificial intelligence and machine-learning supported tools to help patients and their families find scientifically accurate, evidence-based information, organize questions and prepare for conversations with their physicians.

"This program is about helping patients and families seek credible information, process it and retain it so that when they meet with their doctors they feel prepared and confident in discussing the options and satisfied with the decisions they are making," Song said.

The research will test whether the SCIPI platform improves communication with clinicians, increases patient satisfaction with treatment decisions and enhances quality of life for patients.

The project also represents a significant step in evaluating how digital health technologies can be integrated into clinical care. If successful, the program could serve as a scalable model for supporting cancer patients in a variety of healthcare settings, including academic medical centers, community hospitals and military health systems.

Addressing a silent struggle

Prostate cancer presents a unique set of challenges that can be difficult for patients to discuss openly.

"It's a very private condition," Song said. "Many men may be suffering in silence because of issues like sexual dysfunction or loss of control of bodily functions. These are very intimate topics, and people often don't talk about them."

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Those challenges can affect quality of life even after treatment ends, making communication and support especially important.

Earlier research by Song's team, funded by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Nursing Research, developed and tested pilot programs designed to support prostate cancer survivors as they transitioned from treatment back to daily life.

Participants valued the programs, but their feedback revealed an important insight.
"People told us the program was helpful, but it came too late. They said it would have been more beneficial during the treatment decision-making process right after diagnosis," Song said.

That realization prompted the research team to rethink when support should be offered.

Helping patients earlier in the cancer journey

Cancer diagnoses often bring a wave of medical information that can overwhelm patients and their families. In the early days after diagnosis, patients must weigh multiple treatment options that each have potential side effects and implications for long-term quality of life.

"At that moment, people are hearing a lot of information and experiencing a lot of emotions. It can be difficult to absorb everything or even know what questions to ask," Song said.

Over time, some patients may experience regret when they look back months or years later and wish they had chosen a different treatment option.

The SCIPI program aims to reduce that risk by helping patients access reliable information and prepare for clinical consultations earlier in the process.

The web-based platform organizes information into sections that guide patients through the stages of their cancer journey, offering guideline-based medical evidence and educational resources in multiple formats, including written content, videos and audio explanations to accommodate different learning styles.

The system also includes a secure chatbot powered by artificial intelligence and natural language processing. Unlike open internet search tools, the chatbot operates within a closed system that draws only from vetted scientific sources such as government and research-based health information.

"There is so much information online, and not all of it is credible," Song said. "We wanted to make sure the information people receive is accurate and evidence based."

The program is designed not only to help patients but also to streamline communication with physicians and care teams.

"There's been an information explosion for clinicians, too," Song said. "If this program can help patients come prepared and informed, it can improve the quality of those patient-provider interactions while decreasing the burden for providers to repeat the same information to different people."

Researchers also hope the platform will make it easier for patients with limited health literacy or less experience navigating digital health information to access reliable guidance during the stressful period immediately following diagnosis.

A national collaboration

The new pilot proof-of-concept study will engage patients, families and providers to determine how best to integrate SCIPI into electronic medical records so it can reach more people, while also evaluating how well the program improves communication, decision-making satisfaction and quality of life for patients.

The project is being conducted across four cancer centers nationwide to ensure broad applicability of the results. The leading site is the Mays Cancer Center at UT Health San Antonio and other participating sites include UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Moores Cancer Center at UC San Diego and the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

The project began in September, and the research team will begin recruiting participants in phases starting this spring. If the study demonstrates feasibility and early effectiveness, the results could pave the way for a larger national trial and eventual adoption of the platform across health systems.

"Nursing research is about solving real problems in the real world," Song said.

Ultimately, Song hopes the technology will help patients feel more informed and confident during one of the most difficult times of their lives.

"When people understand their options and feel their voices matter, they are more likely to feel at peace with the decisions they make," she said.

Shared By: Claire Kowalick

April 13, 2026

Source: https://news.uthscsa.edu/new-study-aims-to-guide-prostate-cancer-patients-through-early-treatment-decisions/

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Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad Returns May 30

Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad Riders depart Earls Polo Park in the 17th annual Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad on Saturday, May 31, 2025. This year's ride will take place on May 30. (CHRISD.CA FILE)

The countdown is on to the 18th annual Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad next month, as organizers kicked off the six-week awareness campaign on Friday.

"Our 2026 prostate cancer education and awareness campaign starts today and our main message to Manitobans is the importance of early detection," said Moe Sabourin, co-chair, MRFD.

Over its 18-year history, the event has raised nearly $6 million for prostate cancer research and education in Manitoba, with all proceeds staying in the province. Last year's ride raised $762,000, presented to researchers at the Genomic Centre for Prostate Cancer Research.

This year's ride is set for Saturday, May 30. Motorcycle riders will take off from Earls Polo Park, with a police-escorted parade west along Portage Avenue to the Perimeter Highway before continuing to Selkirk, Gimli, and back for the wind-up event at Cowboys, Canad Inns Windsor Park.

Organizers are emphasizing early detection as the campaign's central message. Spokesperson and prostate cancer survivor Ed Johner notes that more than 1.2 million Canadian men have prostate cancer and 80 percent are unaware.

"I wouldn't be here today if I had avoided being tested," said Johner, in a release. "That's our message to men and their families — the best way to fight prostate cancer is with early diagnosis."

2026 MRFD celebrity ride captains are Winnipeg Blue Bomber alumni Adam Bighill, Hamilton Tiger Cats assistant coach Bob Dyce, 92.1 CITI on-air host Poncho Parker, and the Ferguson sisters — Ciel, Téa, Ani and Katrine — Manitoba Motocross champions.

Riders and donors can register at ridefordad.ca/manitoba.

ChrisD.ca is proud to be a returning media sponsor of the 2026 Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad.

April 17, 2026

Source: www.chrisd.ca/2026/04/17/manitoba-motorcycle-ride-for-dad-2026-campaign/

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FUTURE MEETINGS

17 Jun: Dr. Aldrich Ong & Dr. Shen Zhang
"Radiation oncology vs prostate cancer"

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15 Jul: TBA
This will be an especially interesting and informative session

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