



## UROLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

### Media Release

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### Early prostate cancer detection can minimise treatment side effects

The Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand says men should be aware that the risk of side effects from treatment for prostate cancer, such as erectile dysfunction, can be minimised if the cancer is detected early.

Responding to a study led by the Cancer Council which looked at the incidence of sexual dysfunction following prostate cancer treatment, the Urological Society president, Dr David Malouf said, "Treatment for any type of cancer can be associated with side effects. In the case of prostate cancer, there is strong evidence that these can be reduced by early detection. The detection of a cancer at an earlier stage means that it is smaller and requires less extensive surgery, or radiation treatments such as brachytherapy which treat the prostate without affecting the adjacent normal structures."

The Cancer Council study found one treatment in particular, known as androgen deprivation therapy, was associated with 97% of patients reporting impotence after five years.

"Androgen deprivation therapy is most commonly used as a treatment for advanced prostate cancer. We know that treating advanced disease can have adverse side effects, which is one of the reasons the Urological Society encourages men aged 40 and over to discuss a prostate cancer test with their GP. The key to minimising side effects is early detection", he said.

Dr Malouf said that while the risks of temporary or long term impotence are real, so too are the risks of dying from an untreated prostate cancer. Each year the disease claims the lives of about 3,300 Australian and New Zealand men. The latest studies of prostate cancer screening in Europe suggest that prostate cancer deaths may be reduced by almost 50% with regular testing.

"Not all men will require treatment for their prostate cancer. Many low risk prostate cancers can be managed with an Active Surveillance protocol recently adopted by the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand.

"Men dealing with prostate cancer need to know there is a range of very effective treatments for erectile dysfunction if necessary.

"It's very much about early detection and striking the right balance in each individual's case between addressing their cancer threat and maintaining optimal quality of life", Dr Malouf said.

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