

THE DIGITAL EXAMINER



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Address changes, comments should be sent to
info@pccncalgary.org or
Call 403-455-1916
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Talk to someone who has been there

BREAKING NEWS!

PROSTATE CANCER VACCINE GAINS FDA APPROVAL

The History of Provenge

By Steven Reinberg

Thursday, April 29 (HealthDay News) -- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Thursday granted approval to Provenge, a therapeutic vaccine aimed at preventing the spread of prostate cancer in men with an advanced form of the disease.

The new approval is limited to "the treatment of asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body and is resistant to standard hormone treatment," the FDA said.

"The availability of Provenge provides a new treatment option for men with advanced prostate cancer, who currently have limited effective therapies available," Dr. Karen Midthun, acting director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, said in an agency news release.

Experts say the drug's approval could be a milestone against the disease and cancer in general.

Provenge appears to extend survival in men with advanced prostate cancer, and it does so without the serious side effects associated with chemotherapy, radiation and hormone therapy.

"It is certainly exciting to see a drug that has made it this far," Dr. J. Leonard Lichtenfeld, deputy chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society, said earlier this week.

The vaccine is not aimed at preventing prostate cancer in men who have not developed the disease, and it is far from a cure for those who have it, Lichtenfeld stressed. "Provenge represents a modest advance in survival for patients with advanced prostate cancer, but the drug doesn't delay the progression of the disease," he said.

Still, it might prove possible to use Provenge in the earlier stages of prostate cancer, where it might be even more effective, Lichtenfeld said. "The hope is if a vaccine is effective in late-stage disease that it is going to be even more effective in the earlier treatment of that same disease," he said.

But that benefit would have to be shown in clinical trials, Lichtenfeld said. "It will represent a new treatment option. It will have a modest impact on prostate cancer survival, but it's small changes in treatments over time that add up to a major improvement. So I wouldn't be discouraged by what is a small increment in survival."

Provenge is a therapeutic (not preventative) vaccine that is made from the patient's own white blood cells. Once removed from the patient, the cells are treated with the drug and placed back into the patient. These treated cells then cause an immune response, which in turn kills cancer cells, while leaving normal cells unharmed.

According to the FDA, Provenge is given intravenously in a three-dose schedule delivered in two-week intervals.

The vaccine was developed by Seattle-based Dendreon Corp., which conducted initial studies among men with advanced prostate cancer who had already failed standard hormone treatment. Among these men, Provenge extended life by an average of 4.5 months, although some patients saw their lives extended by two to three years. The only side effects were mild flu-like symptoms, according to the study results.

The FDA noted that in one study, men taking Provenge had a slightly higher risk for cerebrovascular events, such as stroke, with 3.5 percent of those taking Provenge suffering such events versus 2.6

PCCN Calgary's
next monthly
meeting will be
held at
7:30 PM on
Tuesday

June 8, 2010 in
the Foothills
auditorium in
the Foothills
Hospital.

Our guest is
Betty Petersen
speaking and
conducting a
hands-on
experience
"Healing Touch
and Self Care"

Women and Prostate
Cancer (WAPC) and
Men's Peer Group
meetings will be
held:

Tuesday June 15,
2010 at Wellspring
1404 Home Road NW
@ 7:30 PM
and

Tuesday June 22,
2010 at
South Calgary
Health Centre
31 Sunpark Pl. SE
@7:30PM

No pre-registration
required-
Free parking at both
locations

PCCN Calgary meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM

percent of those who did not take the drug.

In 2007, an FDA advisory panel recommended that the agency approve Provenge, but at the time the FDA said more data was needed before it would approve the drug.

Dr. Mark Soloway, professor and chair of urology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, said that "we certainly need the opportunity for our patients to have alternatives."

The big question, according to Soloway, is when do you use Provenge? Whether it should be used before chemotherapy or hormone therapy isn't clear, he said.

"There are problems with Provenge," Soloway said. "One is that it's very cumbersome, because patients have to provide their white cells, and I think that's on a regular basis. And two, it's likely to be very expensive." Costs are expected to total \$75,000 (\$93,000) for the full regimen, experts say.

Soloway agreed that Provenge might also be useful in earlier-stage prostate cancer, but studies are needed to prove that.

However, "once it's approved, it's on the market, and with proper informed consent you can use it for localized [early stage] prostate cancer. Whether insurance companies will pay for it is also not known," Soloway said.

Other new drugs to treat prostate cancer, such as Abiraterone, which prevents the production of the male hormone testosterone, are on the horizon and will compete with Provenge for new treatment regimens, he added.

http://www.pcf.org/site/c.1eJRiROrEpH/b.5973843/k.10A3/Prostate_Cancer_Vaccine_Gains_FDA_Approval.htm?msource=may10np&auid=6404417

Volunteers Needed

PCCN Calgary is holding its Second Annual Show and Shine on Sunday July 4, 2010. This is a great event that was well attended last year in spite of the weather. We are looking for volunteers willing to fill various roles. These include registration on Saturday night and Sunday morning, people to man our awareness booth, raffle ticket sellers and so on! If you are interested in getting involved contact Karen to indicate your interest!

Other Events

The Healing and Cancer Foundation's Book Launch: Readings from *The Healing Circle* - with Dr. Rob Rutledge MD and Dr. Timothy Walker PhD

Screening of a short documentary based on the *Skills for Healing* weekend retreat, and light refreshments

Thursday June 10 at 7pm – 9pm

Parkdale United Church, 2919 8th Ave. NW

www.healingandcancer.org

Free admission. Donations accepted.

Yoga and Prostate Cancer

A paper to be presented at the upcoming annual meeting of the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO) suggests that learning and practicing yoga may have significant impact on the long-term health of selected cancer survivors, with particular benefits for sleep patterns and recovery from fatigue.

The paper by [Musian et al.](#) describes a multi-site, phase II/III, randomized, controlled, clinical trial intended to investigate the efficacy of yoga for improving sleep quality, fatigue, and quality of life (QOL) among cancer survivors. The trial enrolled 410 non-metastatic, cancer survivors who were suffering from moderate or greater sleep disruption between 2 and 24 months after completing adjuvant therapy for their cancer. The participants could not have had any yoga experience for at least 3 months prior to trial participation. Patients were then randomized into two groups:

- Group A received standard care and monitoring.
- Group B received standard care plus the 4-week yoga intervention (two classes a week, with each class lasting 75 minutes).

Results of the study are reported as follows:

- 394/410 participants (96 percent) were female.
- The average (mean) age of the participants was 54 years.
- 75 percent of the participants were breast cancer survivors.
- The yoga participants in Group B demonstrated greater improvements in sleep quality, fatigue, and QOL from pre- to post-intervention compared to the control patients in Group A.
- Patients in the yoga group also reduced their use of sleep medications use, whereas the patients in the control group increased their medication use.

There is additional information in [an associated Health Day story](#) on this study, and it seems clear that non-metastatic, female, cancer survivors who are having sleep problems post-therapy do indeed benefit from yoga as a means to address this and related QOL problems. Whether the same results would be seen in comparable, male, prostate cancer patients is more difficult to assess.

Do men have the patience to learn to do yoga well? Certainly they do, but yoga is not exactly one of the most prevalent forms of health practice among male Americans. Is this just a cultural issue? In certain cultures yoga is seen as an eminently respectable and helpful form of self-care for men, perhaps even more so than for women.

Should prostate cancer patients in general be encouraged to consider yoga as part of their long-term care? Perhaps we need more data before we can come to that conclusion. On the other hand, there is a lot of evidence that yoga can be good for general health, and there are no known adverse effects. The simple answer would seem to be, "If you are into it, do it!"

Yoga is offered on a weekly basis at Wellspring Calgary free of charge for those with cancer and their caregivers.

Father's Day Run

On Sunday June 20, 2010 the PCCN Calgary team, The Digital Examiners is helping to put an end to prostate cancer by participating in the Safeway Father's Day Walk/Run 2010 at Calgary - Eau Claire Market.

This Father's Day help us honour dads past and present by joining our team. Join in the fight against prostate cancer by clicking on the link below to either join our team or make a donation.

<http://my.e2rm.com/TeamPage.aspx?Lang=en-CA&TSID=269008>

From our Team Page, click on the 'Join My Team' button to register and begin fundraising. If you can't join us in person, join us in spirit by making an on-line donation to our team. You can also get more information from:

www.fathersdayrun.ca

The Digital Examiners will be taking the walk option of the Walk/Run, so don't feel like you need to train in order to participate. An important note regarding this fundraising is that 50% of the funds raised will come to PCCN Calgary. The extra bonus is that the other 50% goes to Prostate Cancer Canada, the only national organization devoted 100% to battling this disease.

Feel free to direct any questions my way.

Jason Bedard (Team Captain) 403-873-2284

Survey Results

There were over 300 surveys returned! Here are some of the results:

Average number of meetings in past year:3.5

Treatment: Surgery 43%, External Beam 34%, Brachy11%
Hormone23%

Satisfaction: 84% of respondents were either satisfied or extremely satisfied. Remainder were neutral.

Digital Examiner: Majority of members prefer regular mail. A digital version is in the works.

Many members offered services for both support and outreach.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Use more plain language in presentations-not everyone understands the terminology.

- Provide more handouts from presentations

- Identify newcomers, connect with them

- Need more social time/Would like more opportunities to meet other members

- Need more presentations to at-risk groups

- Offer more information on prevention, latest drugs/treatments

- Continued/increased focus on diverse groups

- Need cheaper/free parking

Stay tuned to see how we implement your suggestions. Please continue to offer suggestions! We listen!

2009 in Review

Presentations

Dr. Ted Jablonski: Erectile Dysfunction, what's up for 2009

Dr. Richard J.Baverstock : Incontinence and ED following radical prostatectomy

Dr. Robert Buckman: Laughter, the second best medicine

Dr. Larry Ohlhauser: *How to be the CEO of your own health*

Video: New Discoveries in Prostate Cancer Research, highlights of the 2008 Los Angeles Prostate Cancer Conference

Dr. Richard Baverstock : Management of Prostate Enlargement: From medications to Green light laser

Nat Lemay: Prostate Health– Fitness for Life

Dr. Siraj Husain: Latest developments in the brachytherapy program at Tom Baker

Dr. Dean Ruether and Cheryl Scott, RN: What's new for men with prostate cancer in Southern Alberta

Dr. Chris Carruthers, PhD: Managing Cancer: Can Complementary Therapies Help?

Dr. Jun Kawakami : Robotic Assisted Radical Prostatectomy: projected impact on patients in Southern Alberta

Special Events

Dr. Robert Buckman event: 500 attendees, 10 health support organizations

Community Outreach

Calgary Stampede Parade

Auto and Truck Show

Underwear Affair

Tim Horton's Brier

Fairy Tales Film Festival

Positively Purple Conference

Mall Displays

Over 25 service club and corporate PC awareness presentations

Digital Examiner

Mailing list is now over 900 subscribers

Celebrated 10 years

Requests coming from as far away as Germany and Australia as well as Canada and the U.S.

Meetings

Women and Prostate Cancer North/Peer Meeting

Women and Prostate Cancer South/Peer Meeting

General Meeting/Warriors



PCCN Calgary Warriors

The Warriors are a caring and compassionate group, well organized and full of information for those men and their families dealing with advanced prostate cancer. The Warriors serve the very important needs of hormone refractory PCCN Calgary members and all those who have an interest in management of advanced prostate cancer. The Warriors meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:14 pm prior to the main PCCN Calgary meeting. Warriors meet just outside the auditorium at Foothills Hospital in room #AGW2. Signs will be posted. Men with advanced prostate cancer, their partners and family members are most welcome to attend! For more information call Fred McHenry at 403.282.3920

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Women and Prostate Cancer
(WAPC) and Men's Peer Group meetings will be held:
Tuesday June 15, 2010 at Wellspring1404 Home Road NW @ 7:30 PM
and
Tuesday June 22, 2010 at South Calgary Health Centre
31 Sunpark Pl. SE@7:30PM
These informal meetings allow women to share their concerns and experiences in a friendly non-threatening environment. Meetings for men are held in separate rooms at both locations.
No pre-registration required- Free parking at both locations
If you would like more information about either meeting please contact Karen Whiteman at 403.455.1916

Many thanks to our many friends and supporters!

PCCN Calgary has many generous individuals and companies who support our community work. We do not get government funding. On behalf of our 900+ members, thank you for your generosity. With your support we will continue our good work in 2010, our fifteenth year, and onward!

Newsletter * General Meetings * One-On-One visits * Speakers * Website

Charitable Number: 86926 1602 RR 0001

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Please make cheques payable to
**Prostate Cancer Canada Network
Calgary (PCCN Calgary)**
PO Box 72126
RPO Glenmore Landing
T2V 5H9

**Canada Revenue Agency: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/>
or donate online through www.canadhelps.org**