

# NEWSLETTER



Prostate  
Cancer  
Research  
pcr.org.uk



## Our sights set on a national screening programme

From delivering your petition to 10 Downing Street to providing evidence for change, find out how Proactive for Your Prostate is championing screening, see page 6 >

WINTER 2024

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# Welcome



As we step into another exciting chapter for Prostate Cancer Research, we are thrilled to update you on the incredible strides we've made across several impactful initiatives, all made possible by your continued support.



We kick off this issue with a spotlight on our Real Talk campaign, which has garnered widespread media attention, including on Sky Sports and other major outlets. Through this campaign, we've been able to reach new audiences and drive crucial conversations around health inequalities, particularly in prostate cancer care.



This year, we are proud to be part of The Big Give, an extraordinary opportunity to double your donations. Combined with our upcoming Breast Cancer Now (BCN) grant call, we aim to amplify the reach of our research and support more groundbreaking projects.



Our efforts around prostate cancer screening are gaining momentum with the latest results from our Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA). The findings highlight the immense benefits of early detection, which we'll be championing through our Proactive for Your Prostate initiative, aiming to save more lives and reduce overtreatment risks.



Meanwhile, we are thrilled to announce the completion of Dr Kirsteen Campbell's project. Her work has laid the groundwork for even more innovative research, and we cannot wait to see how it will influence future breakthroughs. Speaking of breakthroughs, we've also made significant progress with GlycoScoreDX, an exciting new biomarker that could revolutionize early diagnosis.



Lastly, the ReMOVE project continues to push boundaries in how we manage overall wellbeing for people with prostate cancer and at risk of it, and we look forward to sharing the latest updates with you in this newsletter.

**Oliver Kemp**  
CEO

As we continue to build on these foundations, your role remains at the heart of our mission. Each newsletter, each update, and each breakthrough is part of a larger narrative that you help write – of advancement and collective action.

Thank you for being a part of our mission to transform lives through research. Your commitment allows us to drive change and offer hope to countless individuals and their families.

Connect with us to stay up-to-date with our latest news and tell us your stories:

- @prostatecancerresearch
- @PCR\_News
- /prostatecancerresearchnews
- /prostate-cancer-research

## Mark's story

# Sharing your story can save another man

I initially saw my GP in early March 2019 as I had not been feeling well. I had been using the toilet frequently during the night and often had to rush to get there. I was told I had prostatitis, prescribed antibiotics and asked to come back in six weeks if it hadn't improved. But it got worse.

By this time, I had done a little bit of research on the internet and thought 'I wonder if I have prostate cancer?' My GP issued me with a prescription for stronger antibiotics but another six weeks later, things still hadn't improved. I decided to book a private consultation and was referred for further tests. Within two weeks, I had all the scans and biopsies and I got the news in July 2019: I had prostate cancer that had spread to my spine, ribs and hip.

I had six rounds of chemotherapy. In the middle of my treatment, I picked up neutropenia, which is when you have very low levels of a type of white blood cell called a neutrophil in your blood which makes it harder for your body to fight infection. My healthcare team got it under control really quickly and I was back on chemotherapy ten days later. I was then put on a hormone injection which I have had every three months since.

Chemotherapy did leave me with a few issues like fatigue and shortness of breath. I have also experienced urinary problems and in January 2022, I underwent a TURP procedure as I was struggling to pass water. I do also suffer from bone pain where the cancer has spread but I am prescribed Naproxen and that generally keeps the pain under control. I would describe it as a dull ache, permanent but a bit like a toothache. You know it's there, but it's under control.

Having initially been told my prognosis was six months to two years, I am very lucky to now be five years down the line. I have



continued to do things like gardening and cleaning the car; every now and again I even get caught up a ladder and the family go mad! I've got a seven-year-old grandson who I am very close with and I take him swimming and play a little bit of football with him. Staying active is important. That's what the consultant said: if you can remain as active as possible, you'll get a benefit from it, so I took those words literally and I do as much as I can.

My son ran the London Marathon in 2021 and my daughter then jumped out of a plane. In total, they raised around £20,000 for prostate cancer. My former colleagues in the police who had all donated decided to go for prostate cancer tests. Five were diagnosed with prostate cancer but went on to have treatments that were successful. I wasn't lucky enough, but if sharing my story saves my son or one of my colleagues, then that is a huge positive.

Throughout my experience, I have had faith in my oncologist. For those starting this journey, it can seem scary. Just that word alone, 'cancer', terrifies people, but your healthcare team really do care and it's what they do every day of the week.



You can learn and discover more about prostate cancer, treatments and side effects at [theinfopool.co.uk](https://theinfopool.co.uk)



The Big Give Christmas Challenge

# The Bone Metastasis Collaboration Fund

**Prostate Cancer Research has teamed up with Breast Cancer Now to launch the Bone Metastasis Collaboration Fund. We believe by working together we can provide more hope to patients like Joe.**



*I like me. I like being me and I don't plan on letting cancer change that until the bitter end. Joe*

Patients with bone metastases absolutely need research breakthroughs in prevention and treatment. Breakthroughs help prolong lives, increase quality of life, and provide hope for a cure.

Supporting our Big Give Christmas Challenge this year will fund this work directly, by backing vital research to restore hope to those facing perhaps the most challenging prostate cancer diagnosis of all.



## Joe's story and hope for the future

Joe MacPhail is 52, and a former small business owner, he lives in Cumbernauld near Glasgow, with his wife of 31 years, Karrena, and their daughter.

Diagnosed with incurable small cell prostate cancer in 2022 aged 49, Joe was told at the time the disease had already spread to his bones.

"Having bone metastases meant that I was given the news that my cancer couldn't be cured and future treatments would be palliative," Joe shares. "That was a really hard thing to hear, as that statement killed any hope of total recovery stone dead and left my family and myself devastated."

For many men like Joe, the spread to bone causes debilitating pain and reduces quality of life drastically. "That pain reaction is noticed by my wife and daughter," Joe says. "Makes them worry as nobody likes to see anyone in pain".

Despite this, like many others facing similar prognoses, Joe is tackling his diagnosis with resilience and positivity.

"I still have my moments, but I haven't changed my daily routines. I just feel that if I start doing things differently just because I have cancer then I am cheating myself and my family out of a normal life while it is still possible."



# Double your impact this Christmas

## Join the Big Give Christmas Challenge 3-10 December only



Help us reach  
this year's target  
of £89,000 and  
support more  
men with bone  
metastases.

All donations made to Prostate Cancer Research through our Big Give Christmas Challenge appeal page will be matched, doubling your donation. That means your gift will go twice as far in supporting vital research into bone metastases. Every penny you give will support the Bone Metastasis Collaboration Fund. Your gift will give hope this Christmas.

## Research breakthroughs offer hope for new treatments and therapies for men like Joe



*I think immunotherapy and gene therapy are the most exciting areas of research. Imagine being able to train your own immune system to recognise cancer cells and destroy them in the same way it would recognise common viruses! The cancer targeted directly without causing devastation to the body that happens with chemotherapy. This would greatly improve the lives and survivability of people like myself who are living with bone metastases. **Joe***

## How to donate to the Christmas Challenge



There are lots of ways in which you can donate:

- use the **QR code**
- follow this weblink **[bit.ly/BIGGIVE24](https://bit.ly/BIGGIVE24)**
- visit the Big Give at **[donate.biggive.org](https://donate.biggive.org)** and **Explore Campaigns for PCR**

## Donate any time, in any way

**Every single pound counts towards our research.** You can give online, via bank transfer, through the post and on the phone, any time. See the donation form with this newsletter.



Treating advanced prostate cancer

# Chemotherapy explained



**Cancer cells can grow and reproduce (divide) very quickly. Chemotherapy helps to stop these fast-growing cells from reproducing and growing.** Chemotherapy is usually only given as a treatment for advanced prostate cancer – cancer that has spread outside of the prostate. The most common chemotherapy medicine for prostate cancer is Docetaxel (Taxotere).



For more information about prostate cancer, download a free copy of our patient booklet

<https://bit.ly/PCRBooklet>



## How is chemotherapy given?

Chemotherapy is usually given via an intravenous infusion (drip). You usually receive chemotherapy as an outpatient and will need to go for treatment every few weeks for several months. The exact timing and length of treatment will depend on the medicines that you are taking and the type of prostate cancer. You may get steroid tablets or other medications alongside your chemotherapy. These can help with side effects and make the chemotherapy more effective.

## What are the side effects of chemotherapy?

Chemotherapy kills or slows down the growth of both cancer cells and normal cells and so it can cause side effects.

### Side effects can include:

- Feeling sick
- Fatigue
- Being more prone to infections
- Anaemia
- More bruising or bleeding
- Hair loss
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of taste
- Neuropathy (tingling or numbness)
- Damage or changes to the nails.

We haven't listed all the possible side effects here as the side effects that you experience will depend on the chemotherapy drugs that you have. Your doctor will explain the side effects for your particular chemotherapy regime.

It is important to note that there are also treatments that can help you to deal with some

of these side effects, such as anti-nausea medication to stop you from feeling sick.

## Where can I go for further support?

NHS patients should always have a contact number for their clinical nurse specialist (or Key Worker). For any queries about your prostate cancer, your clinical nurse specialist is the best person to contact as they will have the information on your individual cancer and treatment.

**The infopool** has a dedicated page on chemotherapy. This includes frequently asked questions, patient stories, and information on side effects:  
[theinfopool.co.uk/treatment/chemotherapy](https://theinfopool.co.uk/treatment/chemotherapy)

**Macmillan** Free confidential advice from specialist cancer advisors:  
[macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/prostate-cancer](https://macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/prostate-cancer)  
Helpline: 0808 808 0000  
(8am–8pm, Mon–Sun)

**Prostate Cancer UK** Speak to a specialist prostate cancer nurse:  
[prostatecanceruk.org](https://prostatecanceruk.org)  
Helpline: 0800 074 8383  
Specialist Nurse Services  
(9am–5pm, Mon–Fri; 10am–5pm, Wed)

**Tackle Prostate Cancer** Find a prostate cancer support group near you:  
[tackleprostate.org/find-a-support-group-near-you](https://tackleprostate.org/find-a-support-group-near-you)

**Maggie's** Free support to anyone with cancer and their families. You can access face-to-face support at one of Maggie's centres or online:  
[maggies.org/our-centres](https://maggies.org/our-centres)

Our new awareness campaign

# Real Talk saves lives



See the full campaign  
[pcr.org.uk/realtalk](http://pcr.org.uk/realtalk)



**We were proud to launch our dynamic Real Talk campaign in September, addressing the stark racial disparities faced by Black men with prostate cancer.** The bold campaign, headed by Premier League footballer Clinton Morrison, actor Colin McFarlane, and comedian Aurie Styla, raised awareness of prostate cancer within Black communities, aiding us in our mission of eradicating the inequality faced by Black men.



Multi-platform campaign via a website, social postings and films, created to reach Black people wherever they may be looking

1 in 4 Black men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, compared to 1 in 8 White men and 1 in 13 men of other ethnicities. Black men are also two times more likely to die from the disease than White men. Despite this stark reality, recent polling conducted by PCR of 2,000 Black adults in the UK told us that less than a third of the community are aware that Black men are at double the risk of prostate cancer.

Addressing the lack of awareness head-on, our Real Talk campaign featured a short comedy film of Black men in a barbershop, with the characters encouraging men to have a “Real Talk” about prostate cancer diagnosis and symptoms. Alongside this, a powerful interview video featuring Black prostate cancer survivors and healthcare professionals was featured, showing their journeys of living with the disease, highlighting the importance of early detection and open conversations.

We would like to thank everyone who pledged to “have a Real Talk” about prostate cancer with someone in their community and to everyone who shared the video with their loved ones to spark conversations about the

disease. We can only tackle this disparity through working together with the community and healthcare professionals.

The campaign has also been featured in national newspapers and press, including Sky Sports and The Independent. This was key to getting eyes on it and raising awareness.

While we are incredibly proud of the campaign and the role it has played in raising prostate cancer awareness within Black communities, we recognise that it is just one step in a much larger effort. **Thank you for supporting us as we continue to push for accountability, change, and innovation until the disparity is eradicated and all men can live without the fear of a prostate cancer diagnosis.**

## Talk to your GP about the PSA blood test

- The PSA blood test can help detect prostate cancer, and can be done at a GP surgery
- Any man over 50 can get the PSA blood test for free on the NHS
- GPs are free to use their clinical judgement regarding those under the age of 50 who are at increased risk of prostate cancer

*The Real Talk project is a collaboration between Prostate Cancer Research (PCR) and pharmaceutical company Ipsen Ltd. The amplification of the campaign has been partially funded by Ipsen Ltd.*



Campaign for early detection

# Proactive for Your Prostate



**At PCR, we believe that no man should suffer or lose his life to prostate cancer simply because the right screening programme isn't in place.**

That's why, earlier this year, we launched our campaign **Proactive for Your Prostate**. From the start, this has been a united effort, bringing together patients, politicians, healthcare professionals, and the public with one shared goal: to introduce a targeted national prostate cancer screening programme. And we could not have come this far without you.



**138,642 of you** signed the petition submitted to 10 Downing Street on 27 August



**More than 50 MPs** have offered their support in a variety of ways



**Over 4,500** people have written to their MP sharing their stories

## Building momentum with the public

The first phase of our campaign has been a huge success, and this is thanks to your incredible support. More than 138,000 of you signed our petition calling for urgent changes to prostate cancer screening guidelines. In August, we delivered your voices to 10 Downing Street, carrying the message loud and clear: the time for action is now.

We are truly grateful for the energy and passion that our supporters have brought to this campaign. It is because of you that we are now able to take this to the next level.

## Taking action in parliament

As we move forward, we're asking you to continue standing with us in this vital second phase of **Proactive for Your Prostate**.



Supporters of the campaign include Karen (pictured above with her deceased husband Mark) and Brian (right), whose lives have been impacted by prostate cancer



Now, more than ever, we need your help to build political pressure to ensure that our policymakers know that they cannot ignore this issue. Over 4,500 people have already written to their MPs, sharing their personal stories about how prostate cancer has touched their lives. This extraordinary level of engagement has led to more than 50 MPs from across the political spectrum offering their support for our campaign – tabling parliamentary questions, requesting further briefings, and pledging to take action.

These MPs come from all corners of politics, including Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Conservatives, SNP, Plaid Cymru, Reform, the DUP, and independents, and from right across the width and breadth of the UK. This overwhelming show of cross-party support is something we could not have achieved without you. Your personal stories, your voices, and your actions have made all the difference.

We've also seen fantastic media coverage, which has helped elevate this cause even further. **Proactive for Your Prostate** appeared on seven TV channels, including ITV, BBC, Sky News, and GB News. We've been featured in the *Daily Mail* and the *Mirror*, and reached listeners across 44 radio stations, including TalkSport and LBC. This incredible media presence is amplifying our message and ensuring that prostate cancer screening reform remains on the agenda.





# Presenting the evidence for change

**We know that public support is only part of the battle, and we are working hard behind the scenes to provide the most compelling evidence to make the case.** Your continued engagement has allowed us to develop a strong foundation of data that shows just how critical this screening programme would be.

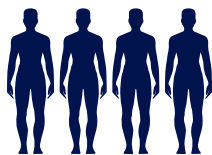
One important piece of evidence is our report on overdiagnosis and overtreatment. In this we have sought to show how advances in clinical practice, such as multi-parametric MRI (mpMRI) and guided transperineal biopsies, have reduced the risks of overdiagnosis. Additionally, more men with low-risk localised prostate cancer are now opting for active surveillance, avoiding unnecessary treatments and their side effects. These are a crucial part of the argument in favour of a targeted screening.

Beyond that, we commissioned Deloitte to develop a macroeconomic model and have

produced a cost-benefit analysis report that highlights the socio-economic benefits of early detection. For high-risk groups aged 45-69, early detection using current clinical methods (of a PSA, followed by mpMRI and a targeted perineal biopsy) would see 1,392 fewer stage 4 diagnoses each year. What we can also show is that with the introduction of an effective 'reflex test' between a PSA and MRI in the clinical pathway, a universal screening programme for men aged 50-69 could not only save lives but benefit the country economically too.



Visit our campaign website **ProactiveForYourProstate.co.uk**



In the high risk groups, **the benefits outweigh the risks over fourfold**, saving lives and improving long-term outcomes.



Screening men aged 50-69 in the general population could reduce the number of stage 4 diagnoses **each year by 4,607**.



Screening men aged 50-69 would contribute to over **£200 million in economic benefits to the UK**.



**Contact your MP today** and add your voice to the campaign

## Launching the cost-benefit analysis

On 14 November, we will hold a significant cross-party event at the House of Commons to launch our cost-benefit analysis report. This evidence will play a vital role in convincing policymakers of the need for a targeted prostate cancer screening programme.

## Join us in the fight for change

Everything we have accomplished so far is because of you. But we still have more to do. **Let's be Proactive for Your Prostate, and let's make a difference, one letter, one voice, and one action at a time. Share your story and let them know how much this means to you.**

Our patient data platform

# Prostate Progress



Find out more about Prostate Progress  
[pcr.org.uk/Prostate-Progress](http://pcr.org.uk/Prostate-Progress)

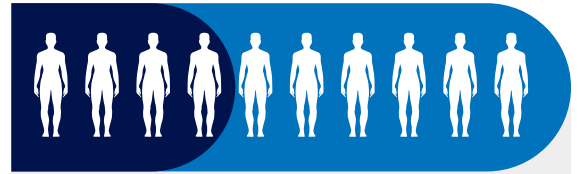


Sign up and be part of the change  
[Prostate-Progress.org](http://Prostate-Progress.org)



**In July, Prostate Cancer Research (PCR) and NHS England (NHSE) announced the launch of Prostate Progress, a pioneering patient data platform designed to transform prostate cancer testing, treatment and care.** This platform will provide secure access to healthcare data for research, support innovative solutions, and improve treatment outcomes.

Prostate Progress has been selected as the first-ever Network Driver Project within the NHS Research Secure Data Environment (SDE) Network, which includes 12 subnational SDEs. This network ensures secure access to healthcare data for approved research led by academics, industry, and NHS researchers. Prostate Progress will collaborate with three SNSDEs covering a third of the UK population.



Over **4,000** patients from across the UK have already joined Prostate Progress. Our target is **10,000** patients signed up by 2025.

## How to get involved:

Anyone in the UK who has been diagnosed with prostate cancer can participate from the comfort of their home via phone, computer, or tablet. Simply register, provide informed consent, and complete baseline questionnaires with follow-up surveys.

Join us in shaping the future of prostate cancer care. Visit **ProstateProgress.org** today to take part in this transformative project.



**GlycoScoreDx update**

# Thanks for supporting Proven Connect



Find out more about Proven Connect on our website  
[provenconnect.com](http://provenconnect.com)



**Our incredible supporters raised over £20,000 for Proven Connect projects.**

A big thank you to everyone who responded so generously to our summer appeal. We caught up with Sonja Lawrence, Associate Director, Proven Connect, to get an update on the GlycoScoreDx trial she talked about in the appeal.

“The trial scheduled for the summer has been delayed, but is due to start shortly. We’re finalising the Bio-Bank process and have registered the trial with the National Library of Medicine.”

The GlycoScoreDx trial will measure three molecules in the blood that research shows are higher in men with prostate cancer. If successful, then the trial could lead to faster diagnosis.

This is just one of the projects funded by Proven Connect, our translational research arm that works to bring discovery science closer to use in clinics.

We’re so grateful to everyone who gave to the summer appeal as Sonja explains:

“We had a wonderful response to the summer appeal. It showed how much supporters care about ensuring the most innovative new research reaches patients sooner. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who donated – together we can fund more projects like GlycoScoreDx in the future.”



Re **MOVE**

Thank you for supporting our reMOVE programme

# A resounding success



Exercise can increase the survival rate of prostate cancer by as much as 30-40%

**In our summer issue, we announced reMOVE – our innovative exercise programme designed for people who have been inactive.** We're now thrilled to announce that, thanks to your support and participation, the first phase of reMOVE has been a resounding success, with 100% of participants reporting feeling healthier overall, fitter overall and that their attitudes towards health have changed for the better. **Thank you to everyone who helped us build such a positive and engaged community.**

Research published earlier this year found that even a slight boost in fitness could reduce the risk of prostate cancer. Higher levels of physical activity may improve survival rates for prostate cancer patients from both prostate cancer and other diseases by as much as 30% and 40%. However, it can be difficult to get moving, especially when you have been inactive for a long time. Despite this challenge, we are delighted that our reMOVE programme has provided a much-needed head start for those who needed it most, and we couldn't have done it without you.



12 WKS

The programme ran for 12 weeks with two different phases.



Participants were a range of men, from the ages of 58 to 74, with the majority having had prostate cancer.

Supported by Adam Alexander of Back in Charge Blueprint, participants were part of an encouraging online community, having access to weekly group Zoom meetings, a dedicated Facebook group, and a programme app. We are very grateful to everyone who took part for creating such an encouraging community.



This was not your typical exercise programme: Adam worked closely with participants to understand their preferences, dislikes, and goals. He coached and encouraged them to discover exercises and foods they enjoyed, helping them to tailor the programme to meet their individual needs. The programme was particularly successful

in our aim of coaching people into making behavioural changes and forming sustainable habits rather than putting them on a typical set diet and exercise regime. Since the closing of the first phase, the men have had incredible wins in mentality, attitude, behavioural change, and physical health. Incredibly, one man successfully lost 28lbs, improving his overall health and fitness.

Though entry into reMOVE is now closed, the success of the programme has revealed there is a real need for support for men diagnosed with, and at risk of prostate cancer. In the future, we plan to expand and enhance the reMOVE programme, with the goal of making it into a national programme. Until then, we'd like to extend our gratitude to supporters of this campaign.

**We would not have achieved the success of this programme without your enthusiasm and readiness to engage with us in this unique initiative. Thank you.**



Halfway through this transformative fitness and mindset course, I've already experienced significant weight loss and gained a profound understanding of food and lifestyle choices. I'm confident that completing the course will bring even more incredible benefits to my health and overall well-being, and I believe that this course will help many in a similar situation who thought they couldn't change their old habits and lifestyle.

**Richard**, 66, currently on Active Surveillance

From within our community

# Research transforming lives

## In the news

### A new immunotherapy for prostate cancer

**Researchers at the University of Sheffield have developed a new way to deliver immunotherapy that can delay hormone therapy resistance meaning men with prostate cancer live longer.**

The new immunotherapy used innovative nanoparticles to trigger a type of immune cell called T cells to attack the cancer. This study was funded by the charity Prostate Cancer UK and marks an exciting step forward for developing immunotherapy treatments that work for those with prostate cancer. The researchers are now working towards bringing this research into clinical trials.

### Could a blood test identify the best treatment for you?

**Researchers in the US wanted to find out whether a blood test to identify circulating tumour cell count could be used to predict survival in men with advanced prostate cancer.** Circulating Tumour Cells or CTCs are cells that are shed from the primary tumour (in this case the prostate) and then carried around in the blood. The researchers found that men with a lower CTC count lived longer. Men who had five or more CTCs survived for 27.9 months on average compared to 56.2 months for those with one to four CTCs and over 78 months for those with none. These results suggest that CTC count could be used to identify those people who have more aggressive disease and who would therefore benefit from more intense treatments or from taking part in clinical trials.

## Our projects

### Tackling racial disparities together

**In October, as part of our ongoing commitment to closing the racial disparity in prostate cancer, we opened our second Racial Disparities Grant Call.** We are delighted to announce that we have now received a number of incredible applications from talented scientists across the globe.

In the UK, prostate cancer affects 1 in 4 Black men, compared to 1 in 8 men of other ethnicities, and in the US, 1 in 25 African American men will die of prostate cancer compared to 1 in 45 White men. This racial disparity is one of the largest seen out of all cancer types, which is why we need more research to understand why and provide solutions.

Together, we can create a future where no one has to fear losing a loved one to prostate cancer.

### Because of you, we've launched a brand-new project

**August 2024 saw the launch of Dr Claire Fletcher's new research project to develop a new treatment for advanced prostate cancer.** This will ultimately mean more people survive prostate cancer and can avoid treatments with severe side effects such as chemotherapy. This crucial project would not have been possible without your generous support.

The team have discovered a tiny piece of DNA-like material, called microRNA-346, that causes very high levels of DNA damage in prostate cancer, but not normal prostate cells. Thanks to PCR's support, they are now looking to turn this discovery into a drug.

This research is supported by a co-sponsored award from Prostate Cancer Research and Worldwide Cancer Research.

# One step closer to better treatments



## **In September 2024, Dr Kirsteen Campbell and her team successfully completed their PCR research project.**

The researchers identified key proteins involved in driving advanced prostate cancer and showed that these could be potential targets for future treatments. This marks a huge step forward in making sure all patients have access to treatments that work for them and their cancer, beyond resistant to current drugs.

This project was only made possible through the generous support of our PCR community. Find out more about the research you made happen and how you're helping to create a better future for people living with prostate cancer.

### **What is MCL-1?**

MCL-1 is a protein which plays a key role in stopping cell death. However, high levels of this protein can result in cells growing uncontrollably, leading to cancer. Men with advanced prostate cancer have been found to have high levels of MCL-1 and high levels of MCL-1 have also been linked to hormone therapy resistance. Despite this, we understand very little about MCL-1's role in prostate cancer.

### **What was their research project?**

With funding from your donations, Dr Kirsteen Campbell and her team set out to change this. They explored MCL-1's role by growing prostate cancer cells in the lab. They wanted to understand why we see such high levels of MCL-1 in advanced prostate cancer.

The team also wanted to test whether advanced prostate cancer could be treated with drugs that target MCL-1. Drugs targeting MCL-1 have already been developed to treat blood cancers. This means that if they are shown to be successful against prostate cancer, they could be translated into the clinic and made available to patients quicker than other new treatments.

### **What did they find out?**

The researchers have made key discoveries about how MCL-1 drives prostate cancer. They have uncovered other proteins that MCL-1 interacts with and which play a role in the development of some forms of

prostate cancer. This is a hugely important discovery as identifying the proteins involved in advanced prostate cancer is crucial to developing future treatments that stop it.

The team also found that combining MCL-1 targeting drugs with hormone therapy killed the advanced prostate cancer cells more effectively in the lab than either treatment by itself. This result is very exciting as it could mean we are able to develop treatments that work for patients even when their cancer develops resistance to current drugs.



"This PCR funded project has helped define MCL-1 as a target in prostate cancer. This means that we now have a better understanding of how MCL-1 operates within prostate cancer cells, and this knowledge will help us develop new combination treatment approaches. For patients, this could ultimately result in new and better therapeutic options. We are keen to keep building on these important findings to bring these new treatments to the clinic.

One highlight of working with PCR has been the opportunity to participate in the 'Meet the Scientists' events. Learning about the lived experience of prostate cancer has really enhanced our understanding of the disease and motivated us in our quest to find better and kinder treatments."

**Dr Kirsteen Campbell, Lead Researcher**



**infopool**  
the patient  
resource

theinfopool.co.uk



New online tools for patients

# Infopool toolkits

We're excited to introduce four new, interactive information toolkits on the infopool, designed to empower and support patients on their prostate cancer journey. The toolkits are inspired by feedback from people with prostate cancer and their families. They use engaging formats such as animations, infographics, cartoon strips and patient videos.



## Mastering conversations

Communicating with your healthcare team can be challenging with many patients struggling to have effective conversations. They often leave appointments feeling frustrated.

This toolkit includes:

- help to get the most of healthcare interactions
- descriptions of who you'll meet along your treatment pathway
- tips for managing difficult conversations and voicing concerns



## How to access and make use of side effects support

Patients tell us that they struggle to find the right support to manage their side effects.

This toolkit includes:

- information on common side effects
- how to find support



Peeing problems (urinary incontinence)



Sexual problems



Hot sweats and fatigue with hormone therapy



Late effects of radiotherapy treatment



Emotional and psychological issues



## Learning about clinical trials

Clinical trials can be a valuable treatment option for some people. However, many are unaware that a trial may be an option for them.

This toolkit includes:

- myths busting
- answers to the most common questions
- stories from people who have taken part in a trial
- signposts to our clinical trial finder



## Shared decision making (SDM)

SDM is a collaborative process where patients are supported by their healthcare team to make informed decisions about their treatment and care.

This toolkit includes:

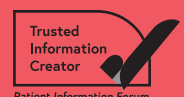
- explanation about SDM and its benefits
- help on how to play an active role in your own treatment decisions



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Chris' fundraising story

# World Nettle Eating Championship 2023

**In 2021 my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer.** By the time he'd been diagnosed it had already advanced into his bones and quickly became resistant to therapies. Seeing my father suffering with advanced prostate cancer made me even more determined to help other men like him. The pain of eating nettles was nothing compared to what my dad was going through everyday.

By background I am a scientist, and I am the CEO of a start-up company called Stratosvir. We have been working with PCR's translational arm Proven Connect for over a year to progress a new way to treat advanced prostate cancer by developing a viral immunotherapy.

Given my personal experience I wanted to help the charity in any way I could. I chose to take part in a fundraiser at a cider farm in Bridport where I entered the World Nettle Eating Championship.

30 minutes chewing is a long time... 30 minutes chewing nettles is an eternity. Surprisingly, the nettles weren't as bad as the rogue one I had eaten during my brief training, leaving a tingle on the fingers, tongue and lips. Halfway through and I was again questioning my life choices, battling some nausea especially when I noticed a caterpillar trying to make a break for it from one of the stalks. Obviously, I then started to wonder if it was alone...

The final whistle came not soon enough, I had found a second wind, but the last five minutes were torture. I was next to an Australian, Tom, who was really gunning it and at the end it looked like our bundles were fairly similar but on the final count I had pipped him. 36 stalks, 72 feet of nettles – I had won! The initial elation was replaced with a slow realisation, as I talked to journalists, that this meant I would probably have to defend the title, oh boy?!

I undertook this challenge to fundraise for PCR as their work is so important for promoting and funding research into prostate cancer. I would absolutely recommend fundraising for PCR - you don't need to run a marathon. If that's not your thing, you can always think up your own challenge or go slightly leftfield and the brilliant PCR Team are there to offer advice and back you.



If you are interested in learning more about the work of Chris at Stratosvir visit their website **Stratosvir.com** and explore the work of Proven Connect at **ProvenConnect.com** – Bringing medical investors and innovators together.



If you would like to fundraise for us, drop us a line on 0203 735 5448 or email us at [events@pccr.org.uk](mailto:events@pccr.org.uk)





## Prostate cancer steals men's lives

A gift in your Will can create a future free from the impact of prostate cancer

A world free from prostate cancer? Seems like a dream, but with the right level of investment we believe it can be a reality for the next generation. If you care about improving diagnosis, providing accessible treatments and ultimately, saving men's lives, then please consider leaving a gift in your Will to Prostate Cancer Research. Together we can make sure no man dies needlessly.

### Three ways your legacy gift can make a difference to the next generation:

- Help continue our vital work across screening, treatments, and research
- Provide helpful information and support to people living with prostate cancer now and in the future
- Give hope for a world where research means no man dies needlessly from prostate cancer



### Get your free guide to wills and legacies at:

[pcr.org.uk/legacy](https://pcr.org.uk/legacy)

Or contact Ellen Whatmore:

phone 0203 735 5444 | email [EWhatmore@pcr.org.uk](mailto:EWhatmore@pcr.org.uk)



### Ready to make or update your Will?

#### Here is the essential information you'll need:

Charity name: Prostate Cancer Research

Charity number: 1156027

Address: 23-24 Great James Street, London, WC1N 3ES