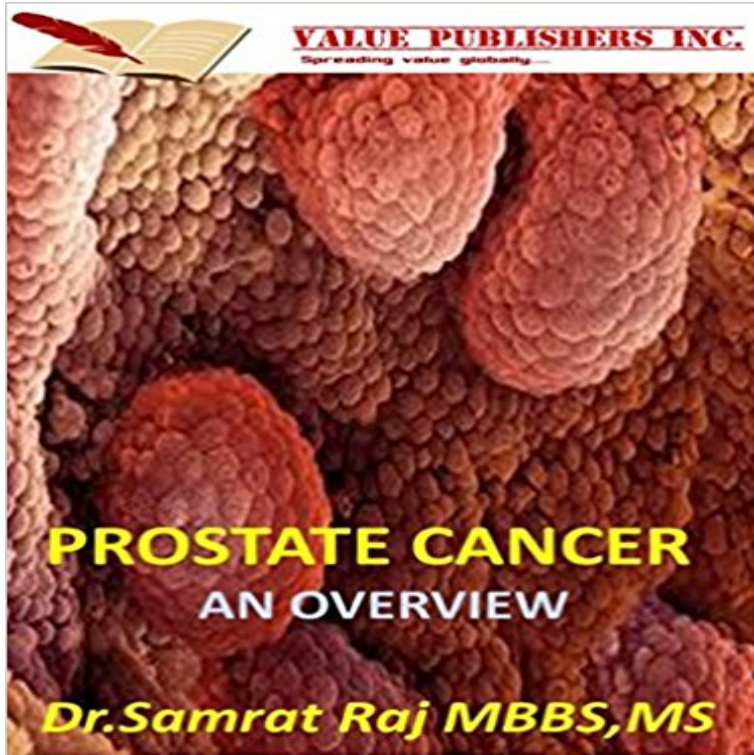


# PROSTATE CANCER - AN OVERVIEW: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROSTATE CANCER



Prostate cancer, also known as carcinoma of the prostate, is the development of cancer in the prostate, a gland in the male reproductive system. Most prostate cancers are slow growing; however, some grow relatively fast. The cancer cells may spread from the prostate to other parts of the body, particularly the bones and lymph nodes. It may initially cause no symptoms. In later stages it can cause difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, or pain in the pelvis, back or when urinating. A disease known as benign prostatic hyperplasia may produce similar symptoms. Other late symptoms may include feeling tired due to low levels of red blood cells. Factors that increase the risk of prostate cancer include: older age, a family history of the disease, and race. About 99% of cases occur in those over the age of 50. Having a first degree relative with the disease increases the risk 2 to 3 fold. In the United States it is more common in the African American population than the Caucasian population. Other factors that may be involved include a diet high in processed, red meat, or milk products or low in certain vegetables. Prostate cancer is diagnosed by biopsy. Medical imaging may then be done to determine if the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Prostate cancer screening is controversial. Prostate-specific antigen testing increases cancer detection but does not decrease mortality. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends against screening using the PSA testing, due to the risk of over-diagnosis and over-treatment as most cancer diagnosed would remain asymptomatic. The USPSTF concludes that the potential benefits of testing do not outweigh the expected harms. While 5 $\alpha$ -reductase inhibitors appear to decrease low grade cancer risk they do not affect high grade cancer risk and thus are not recommended for prevention. Supplementation with vitamins

or minerals do not appear to affect the risk. Many cases can be safely followed with active surveillance or watchful waiting. Other treatments may include a combination of surgery, radiation therapy, hormone therapy or chemotherapy. When it only occurs inside the prostate it may be curable. In those in whom the disease has spread to the bones, pain medications, bisphosphonates and targeted therapy, among others may be useful. Outcomes depend on a persons age and other health problems as well as how aggressive and extensive the cancer is. Most people with prostate cancer do not end up dying from the disease. The five year survival rate in the United States is 99%. Globally it is the second most common type of cancer and the fifth leading cause of cancer-related death in men. In 2012 it occurred in 1.1 million men and caused 307,000 deaths. It was the most common cancer in males in 84 countries, occurring more commonly in the developed world. Rates have been increasing in the developing world. Detection increased significantly in the 1980s and 1990s in many areas due to increased PSA testing. Studies of males who died from unrelated causes have found prostate cancer in 30% to 70% of those over age 60.

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