



Depression can be treated

Many of us feel low or depressed after a cancer diagnosis, during treatment or when we're recovering. But there's a difference between feeling unhappy and being depressed. You may be depressed if you're in a low mood for most of the time, or have lost interest and pleasure in most things for more than two weeks.

Depression is common among people with prostate cancer - about 1 in 20 prostate cancer patients suffer from serious depression. Fortunately depression can be treated. Tackling depression early may mean that you can deal with other problems more easily and quickly.

A recent UK study found that 75% of cancer patients, who were diagnosed with depression, were not receiving adequate treatment.

Ways to help manage depression can include:

Counselling

Ask your treatment team or call Cancer Council Helpline **13 11 20** for more information. Your GP can help you access the Medicare-funded Better Access initiative, which provides counselling with social workers and psychologists. A free consultation with a psychologist is available through prostmate.org.au

Medication

This is helpful for some people. Even if you feel you have good reason to be depressed, medication can help stop depression becoming an additional problem.

For information on depression and tips on overcoming it, contact:

beyondblue - 1300 224 636 - www.beyondblue.org.au

Black Dog Institute - www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Lifeline 24-hr Telephone Crisis Support - 13 11 14 - www.lifeline.org.au

Did you know that.....

- About 300 new cases of prostate cancer were diagnosed last year at the Austin Hospital.
- Between 30%-40% of these men came from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Just a couple of the interesting things we learnt from Carla D'Amico, the Austin's specialist prostate cancer nurse when she spoke to us at our February meeting.

Our Next Meeting

Date: **Wednesday 11 March 2015.**

Time: **10:00 am to 12.30 pm**

Place: **Ivanhoe Uniting Church, Seddon Street, Ivanhoe** (Melways 31 F8)

- Meetings are open to anyone interested in getting support or information on a prostate cancer journey.
- Partners or carers are welcome to all meetings
- **There is no charge for attending.**

The God Box Adventure

Greg's Legacy (<https://kingvalley.wordpress.com/>) is a blog which was started by Greg Naylor who lived at Euroa and wrote about his journey with prostate cancer. Since Greg's death in 2012, the baton has been taken over by Lee ("Popeye") Gallagher who has advanced prostate cancer. I'm grateful to Popeye for his permission to reproduce this article.

As a result of the treatment for his prostate cancer, Popeye suffered chronic radiation damage to the urinary tract which became life threatening. He had bleeding, clot blockage and urinary retention which lead to organ spasms and toxic shock with his whole body in seizure.

In this article I have decided to write about a subject dealing with spirituality. I have been inspired to do this by an event that happened accidentally toward the end of my treatment for the gross hematuria (*blood in the urine that can be seen with the naked eye*) I was experiencing. When I was at my spiritual lowest point during my illness, full of despair and accepting that I could be reaching the end of my life, a friend came to me and suggested the following idea.

My friend suggested I create a "God Box." The idea being that I acquire a small box of some type where I could write down on little slips of paper all my fears, anxieties, problems or prayers and deposit them into the box for God to look after. Once these fears were deposited, I could then just let go of them knowing they were in the hands of a higher authority.

Now I have never been a pious religious person who was a regular churchgoer, but I always retained a sense of confirmation that there existed a God that was responsible for allcreation. The "God Box" suggestion just captured my imagination and fell in line with my overall belief in a creator. I believe that everything in life happens for a reason, both good and bad. I also believe my life has been directed at certain times by someone other than me when events have caused me to travel in different directions than I thought possible. So the search for a suitable box began and my wife took exactly 2 hours to

locate the perfect box in a local op shop for \$2.00.

I began depositing my little slips of paper containing my fears just weeks prior to the investigations that revealed the full extent of my serious condition and the surgical suggestion that could save my life (and has done so). It was during this period that a volunteer chaplain visited me in hospital and seeing the "God Box" at the head of my bed asked me about it. After I told my story, she was amazed and delighted and then commented by asking if I included any "Thank You" notes among the little pieces of paper I was depositing. It was then that I realised with embarrassment that my little notes were all one way with no such words of gratitude given by me. I fixed this issue straight away.

Readers can choose what they say or think about my story here but I can say for myself that my "God Box" came about as a suggestion from a friend during a dark period of my illness. This little box changed my life at the time and continues to do so. It gave me great comfort and hope while easing the fears, the stress and despondency I was feeling. From the time I accepted the concept of my little box and proceeded to deposit my little notes, my health outlook took a turn for the better. I believe that little box entered my life at just the right time and brought about changes that resulted in my successful surgery. It also reinvigorated my spiritual awareness.



I originally thought this was quite a unique idea that my friend suggested to me but I have since discovered the concept has been well-known and used for hundreds of years by many different religious faiths. I have included a few links to web sites for readers who may be interested in further reading.

I decided to write this article in the hope that the "God Box" idea might be of

interest and give comfort to other chronically ill patients or their carers doing it tough out there. "Thank you God"

Further Reading:

<http://tinyurl.com/lhh2exy>

<http://tinyurl.com/p5hbd6p>

<http://tinyurl.com/lluvp5v>

The Role of Spirituality in Health

The effect of spirituality on health is an area of active research right now. Besides being studied by physicians, it is studied by psychologists and other professionals. The studies tend to fall into 3 major areas: mortality, coping, and recovery.

Some observational studies suggest that people who have regular spiritual practices tend to live longer.

Another study pointed to a possible mechanism: interleukin (IL)-6. Increased levels of IL-6 are associated with an increased incidence of disease. A research study involving 1700 older adults showed that those who attended church were half as likely as non-churchgoers to have elevated levels of IL-6.

Patients who are spiritual may utilize their beliefs in coping with illness, pain, and life stresses. Some studies suggest that those who are spiritual tend to have a more positive outlook and a better quality of life.

Spiritual commitment tends to enhance recovery from illness and surgery. Maybe spirituality enables people to worry less, to let go and live in the present moment.

The Association of American Medical Colleges defines spirituality broadly:

"Spirituality is recognized as a factor that contributes to health in many persons. The concept of spirituality is found in all cultures and societies. It is expressed in an individual's search for ultimate meaning through participation in religion and/or belief in God, family, naturalism, rationalism, humanism, and the arts."

Further reading:

<http://tinyurl.com/dx4ed5p>

A Day Without Cancer

One of the highlights of the World Cancer Congress in Melbourne last December was the screening of a documentary called "A Day without Cancer" produced by the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, a one of the world's leading cancer research centres.

"A Day without Cancer" is a 75-minute exploration of cancer's history and poses the provocative question, "Can we conquer cancer in our lifetime?" Leading cancer experts from around the world give an up-to-the-minute look at the victories and failures of our cancer system.

The documentary can be viewed on YouTube at <http://tinyurl.com/nq5kgsq> It's well worth watching.

DISCLAIMER: Information in this newsletter is not intended to take the place of medical advice. You should obtain advice from your doctor relevant to your specific situation before acting or relying on anything in this newsletter. We have no liability whatsoever to you in connection with this newsletter.



Prostate Heidelberg provides information, education and support for those affected by prostate cancer. At the meetings, we

1. *Show respect to members and speakers;*
2. *Allow people to speak and we listen;*
3. *Respect confidentiality;*
4. *Allow new ideas to be shared.*

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month (February to December) from 10:00am -12:30pm.

We meet at the Uniting Church Meeting Room, Seddon St, Ivanhoe (behind the Commonwealth Bank in Upper Heidelberg Rd).

Free parking is available in a large public parking area at rear of the church. Ivanhoe railway station is nearby.

Meetings are open to anyone interested in getting support or information on a prostate cancer journey.

Partners or carers are welcome to all meetings

There is no charge for attending.

COMMITTEE:

Max Shub, Facilitator 0413 777 342
Paul Hobson Secretary 0405 086 869
Chris Ellis
Spiros Haldas
Patrick Woodlock

Annual subscription - \$5 from 1st January per individual, couple, or family.

MEETING VENUE:

Uniting Church Meeting Room
Seddon St, Ivanhoe
(behind the Commonwealth Bank in Upper Heidelberg Rd).

Correspondence

Prostate Heidelberg, PO Box 241 Ivanhoe Vic 3079
ProstateHeidelberg@gmail.com

CALENDAR Meetings: 10:00am -12:30pm

Wed 11 March '15
Wed 8 April '15
Wed 13 May '15
Wed 10 June '15
Wed 8 July '15
Wed 12 August '15
Wed 9 September '15
Wed 14 October '15
Wed 11 November '15
Wed 9 December '15 (Christmas lunch)

Please contact Paul Hobson to redirect or cancel receipt of this Newsletter.

Website

www.ProstateHeidelberg.info

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