

Research Summary:

Prostate cancer mortality and treatment in NSW Aboriginal men

Introduction

Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australian men and the second most common cause of cancer death for Australian men. Previous studies have shown that Aboriginal men have poorer survival than non-Aboriginal men but the reasons for these differences are largely unknown.

Why is this study important?

This is the largest study of prostate cancer in Australian Aboriginal men. Before we did this study very little was known about the medical treatment Aboriginal men receive or their survival after being diagnosed with prostate cancer

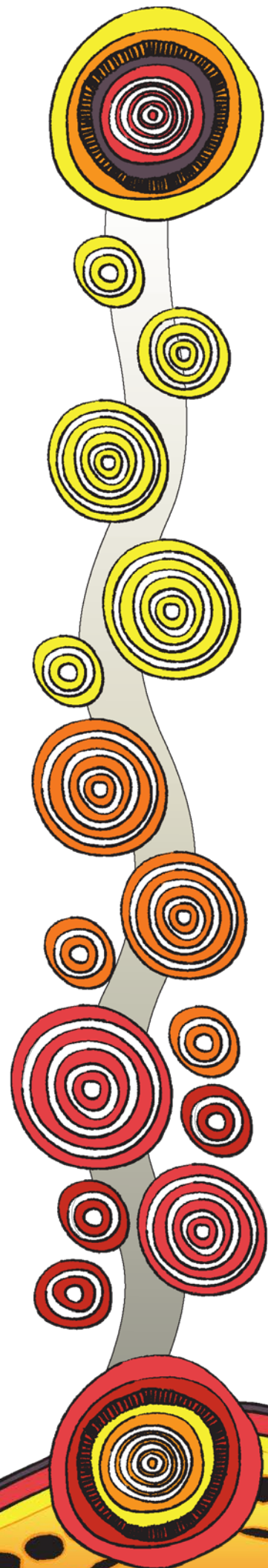
What were the results?

Our results have shown that Aboriginal men in NSW were nearly 50% more likely to die from their prostate cancer than non-Aboriginal men. Although spread of disease and age at diagnosis were found to be similar for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men, the risk of death five years after diagnosis was found to be higher for Aboriginal men. Factors that could have affected the survival of these Aboriginal men, such as how much the disease had spread, where they lived, and other existing chronic health conditions, although considered, did not fully explain differences in survival.

Aboriginal men were also found to be less likely to receive surgical treatment for their prostate cancer than non-Aboriginal men. Factors such as age at diagnosis, other existing health chronic conditions, distance from home to health facilities and socioeconomic disadvantage did not fully explain the differences in surgical treatment.

How was this study done?

We analysed the medical records of 259 Aboriginal and 35214 non-Aboriginal men with prostate cancer. We collected and compared these men's demographic, disease and surgical treatment details.



Recommendations

- Efforts are needed to ensure that Aboriginal men have appropriate access to the best available health care in mainstream and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services.
- Health professionals working with Aboriginal communities need to be aware of the need to diagnose prostate cancer earlier in Aboriginal men.
- Increased community cancer awareness and resources specifically for Aboriginal men could encourage better understanding and earlier diagnoses for some cancers.
- Further research is required to fully understand survival differences for Aboriginal men with prostate cancer.
- There needs to be more practical efforts to increase the awareness of Aboriginal men to talk to their GPs and/or healthcare workers about prostate cancer.

Key message: Individuals, communities and health professionals need to be vigilant in detecting prostate cancer in Aboriginal men as early as possible and ensuring that they receive the best available treatment.

Further information

This research summary has been developed from *“Prostate cancer mortality outcomes and patterns of primary treatment for Aboriginal men in New South Wales, Australia”*. This paper can be accessed online at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/bju.12899/pdf>

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