

ProtecT Study Newsletter

Issue 16, 2021

Thank you!

The ProtecT Study has been running for over 20 years. It has had a huge impact on the way men are diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer in the UK and across the world. This only happened because of your participation. We are very grateful for all the appointments you have attended and every questionnaire completed. It has made a real difference!



Why was the ProtecT study started?

The ProtecT Study began in 1999 to find out whether active monitoring, prostate surgery, and radiotherapy treatments should be offered to men diagnosed with prostate cancer localised within



Athena Lane visited the BBC studios

the prostate gland. Between 2001 and 2009, over 80,000 men living in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, Sheffield, Leicester, Birmingham, Cardiff, Bristol and Cambridge came to a clinic appointment to have a PSA blood test. The research nurses carried out over 30,000 appointments. A total of 1,643 men with prostate cancer agreed to be randomly assigned to one of the three treatments. We have been following you all up since then.

What about the results?

In 2016, the first major results were published in the New England Journal of Medicine. These showed that all three treatments led to very similar small numbers of deaths from prostate cancer. Surgery and radiotherapy reduced the risk of cancer progression and spread over time compared with active monitoring, but caused more problems with urinary, sexual, and bowel symptoms. These results were included in NICE (NHS National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines for prostate cancer treatment. This means that men diagnosed with localised prostate cancer now can discuss all three treatment options with their doctors, using the ProtecT study results that you provided to help them.



A picture of our dedicated team of nurses and researchers in 2006. Can you spot any familiar faces?

What is next for the ProtecT study?

In November 2020, we reached the point where most ProtecT study participants have completed 15 years in the study. Some of you joined in 1999, and you have completed over 20 years. The last men who joined in 2009, like the man below, have completed 11 years. This makes the ProtecT study one of the longest so far in NHS history. You have been fantastic at filling in the questionnaires we have sent you every year. We, and the men who are being diagnosed today, are immensely grateful to you.

Our researchers are busy working on the next major analysis of the ProtecT study results. This analysis is based on information collected by the research nurses, from your health records and the questionnaires completed each year. We will send a newsletter with the key findings when they are available.



The final man to be recruited to the study

A few of the dozens of published ProtecT papers

Information supplied by you and combined with other ProtecT study participants has been included in dozens of publications in major scientific journals around the world. These publications have influenced doctors and scientists, and improved the care of men with prostate cancer across the NHS and in other countries.

What will happen next?

Many of you have completed study questionnaires for 15 years or more. This is the longest study ever on prostate cancer. So when you have reached 15 years of follow up, we will write to you to let you know that we won't send you any more questionnaires to fill in. We will continue to send or email questionnaires to men recruited from 2005 to 2009 - until you reach your 15 year anniversary. The questionnaires you send back are analysed to provide information to help future patients and doctors make decisions about prostate cancer care. The information in the questionnaires is incredibly valuable for understanding your experiences over the longer term. ProtecT study researchers will continue to review your electronic health records to find out how you are getting on and to help understand how men live with prostate cancer over a much longer period of time.

We are exceptionally grateful for your involvement in the ProtecT study - thank you so much!

How do I contact the study? Email info-protect@bristol.ac.uk or call 0800 783 3167



'The ProtecT study is supported by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Programme, HTA 96/20/99; ISRCTN20141297. The funding source had no role in the design, conduct of the study, collection, management, analysis and interpretation or preparation, review, or approval of this newsletter.'