

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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PSA LEVEL PREDICTS FUTURE PROSTATE GROWTH

DALLAS – February 11, 2000 – The higher a man's prostate specific antigen (PSA) level is, the more likely his prostate will continue to grow abnormally, researchers at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas report.

Dr. Claus Roehrborn and colleagues said in January's *Journal of Urology* that men with a PSA level of 3.3 nanograms/milliliter or higher have four times the prostate growth rate over four years of men with a PSA level of 1.3 nanograms/milliliter or lower.

"Urologists want to be able to predict whether a man's prostate will grow slowly or quickly so they can recommend appropriate treatment," said Roehrborn. "Our study shows that the best predictor of growth is the PSA level."

The PSA test, the routine indicator of prostate cancer and enlarged prostate, defines prostate volume by measuring the amount of protein produced by prostate cells. If a man's PSA level is high, he has more prostate cells, indicating growth of his prostate.

The prostate, a walnut-sized bundle of glands, surrounds the urethra. If it becomes enlarged, it can restrict urine flow and cause discomfort.

While prostate cancer is one cause of abnormal prostate growth, prostate growth is not always cancerous. An enlarged prostate, benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), however, can cause serious urinary problems, including acute urinary retention, which may require surgery.

The study means doctors can make a more accurate prediction of whether a man's prostate growth will continue. If it is likely to grow, doctors might prescribe a drug proven to slow the growth, or if it is unlikely to grow, doctors may choose to monitor the growth but not treat it.

"The PSA test provides the doctor with critical information in planning a treatment," Roehrborn said. "Every man over age 50 should have a PSA test and digital rectal exam annually."

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