

New research breaking the silence on a serious but treatable prostate condition affecting 1 in 2 Victorian men aged 50+

A common, non-cancerous prostate condition affecting more than 722,000 Victorian men aged 50+ years,¹⁻³ is seriously compromising their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing, new Australian research reveals.⁴

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), or an 'enlarged prostate', affects 50 to 60 per cent of men aged in their 60s, and a staggering 80 to 90 per cent of those aged 70+ years.^{5, 6} Yet concerningly, the condition is currently under-diagnosed and under-treated,⁷ with new research confirming only 17 per cent of Victorian men aged 50+ years with symptoms have been formally diagnosed.⁴

According to Director of Uro-Oncology, and Head of Robotic Surgery, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse, and Urology Department Head, Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital, Professor Henry Woo, Sydney, Victorian men fail to recognise the commonness, and potential seriousness of the urological condition.⁴

"Living with an enlarged prostate is life-disrupting.

"An enlarged prostate compromises the lives of two in three (66 per cent) affected Victorian men.⁴ A concerning 57 per cent experience an urgent need to pee, while 51 per cent make regular toilet trips at night,"⁴ said Prof Woo.

"This in turn, affects their energy levels, concentration, and productivity, and regularly disturbs their partner's sleep.⁸

"In fact, sleep disturbance is a daily challenge for the more than one in three (35 per cent) men battling the condition," Prof Woo said.

"Other common lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) associated with an enlarged prostate include poor urine flow, difficulty starting and ending flow, peeing more often than usual, and a feeling of not being able to completely empty the bladder.^{4, 9-11}

"For the almost three in five (59 per cent) of those living with an enlarged prostate, needing to know the location of the closest toilets causes feelings of anxiety, nearly two in 10 (17 per cent) reporting "feeling anxious" every day⁴ – symptoms which have also been linked to depression, anxiety, and stress,"¹² said Prof Woo.

"Importantly, men do not need to suffer in silence, because effective treatment options are available."

According to Consultant Urological Surgeon, Mr Tony de Sousa, Melbourne, while a healthy prostate resembles the size of a walnut, an enlarged prostate can grow to the size of a mandarin, or even a lemon.¹³

"There is no agreed definition of normal prostate size and there is a lot of variability among men. In general, the prostate increases in size with age and with this, men are more likely to experience symptoms related to urination. Having said that, even men with a small prostate can have trouble urinating.

"As the prostate grows, it causes obstruction and can block the outlet of the bladder, resulting in symptoms including a slow and interrupted flow,¹⁵ along with a need to urinate frequently, including at night" Mr de Sousa said.

"In some cases, untreated symptoms may lead to progressive bladder damage, urinary tract infections, bladder stones and in rare cases kidney damage, reinforcing the importance of early, proactive medical assessment.

“Importantly, an enlarged prostate, and its associated symptoms, are treatable,”¹⁶ Mr de Sousa said.

“Men experiencing these symptoms should see their family doctor for an assessment and in many cases, will benefit from seeing a specialist Urologist to discuss treatment options.”

Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ) President, Professor Helen O'Connell AO, Melbourne, said too many Aussie men living with an enlarged prostate are not seeking timely medical care.

“An enlarged prostate is a reversible cause of bladder symptoms in ageing men.”^{10, 17}

“The longer the male has had the problem, and the more severe it is, the less likely it is to be fully reversible,”^{18, 19} Prof O'Connell said.

“More than four in five (83 per cent) of men are open to seeking treatment, yet fewer than 40 per cent are really doing so.”⁴

“Among those who do choose to seek treatment, one in five (20 per cent) elect to endure symptoms for six months before doing so,”⁴ said Prof O'Connell.

“A man's enlarged prostate also affects the quality of life of their partner, adversely affecting relationships.”²⁰

Small business owner, and father-to-one, Grayham, 65, Melbourne, wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for six years – frequent and incomplete bladder emptying; a weak urine flow; persistent urination throughout the night; and minimal control over his bladder. These symptoms made him feel ‘like a zombie during the day’, and further compromised his physical and mental wellbeing.

“As I experienced more frequent urination, I also had trouble with my flow, and difficulty emptying my bladder, despite my bladder constantly feeling full, and uncomfortable.

“I never felt rested. I was unable to concentrate during the day, and even driving became difficult,” Grayham said.

“I work in an environment that often requires me to be operating at heights. Sleep deprivation and working at heights are not two things that go hand in hand.

“Living with an enlarged prostate was devastating and dangerous,” said Grayham.

Grayham found it increasingly difficult to cope with his enlarged prostate.

“As time went on, it affected my mental wellbeing. It also affected my relationship, because my partner also experiencing disturbed sleep too,” Grayham said.

According to Grayham, a heavy stigma continues to weigh heavily on men's health.

“Blokes have a tendency to avoid, or delay doctor visits. But for a treatable condition like an enlarged prostate, it's not ideal to bury your head in the sand.

“Blokes might think it's not ‘manly’ to talk about an enlarged prostate, and may feel that it compromises their masculinity, but it's nothing to be embarrassed about,” said Grayham.

“If you've got it a problem, get it fixed. Go to your doctor, and get the help that you need”.

To learn more about symptoms, management and treatment of an enlarged prostate, visit your doctor or head to www.fixmyflow.com.au.

About YouGov market research

Boston Scientific commissioned YouGov to perform an online quantitative survey on benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), involving a nationally representative sample of 1,011 Australian men aged 50+ years between July 4 to 10, 2024.⁴ The data was weighted by age and region to reflect the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) population estimates of Australian men over 50 years of age.

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AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

EXPERTS	
Prof Helen O'Connell AO	President, Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand (USANZ); Urological Surgeon, Epworth Health; Research Professor, Monash University; and Professor, Department of Surgery, University of Melbourne, MELBOURNE
Mr Tony de Sousa	Consultant Urological Surgeon, Epworth Freemasons Hospital, St John of God Berwick Hospital, Mulgrave Private Hospital, and Beleura Private Hospital, Mornington, MELBOURNE
Dr Kapil Sethi	Urological and Robotic Surgeon, MELBOURNE AND SHEPPARTON
Prof Henry Woo	Director of Uro-Oncology; Head of Robotic Surgery, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse; and Urology Department Head, Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital, SYDNEY
Dr Dinesh Patel	Urology Department Head, Canterbury Hospital; Visiting Medical Officer (VMO), Canterbury, Bankstown and Prince of Wales Hospitals; Consultant Urological and Robotics Surgeon, Hurstville Private, Sydney Southwest Private, and St George Private Hospitals, SYDNEY
Dr Joseph Schoeman	Specialist Urological Surgeon, The Wesley Hospital and St. Andrews War Memorial Hospital, Brisbane; Caboolture Private Hospital, Sunshine Coast; and Mater Private Hospital, Bundaberg, who developed symptoms of an enlarged prostate at 50 years of age, BRISBANE
Dr Borjana Barth	Urological Surgeon and Uro-Oncologist, Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital, and Sunshine Coast University Hospital, SUNSHINE COAST
Dr James Aspinall	Specialist Urologist, The Royal Adelaide Hospital, ADELAIDE
Dr Elayne Ooi	Principal and Consultant Urologist Surgeon, Swan Urology; Consultant Urologist, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; and Visiting Medical Practitioner, Hollywood Private Hospital, PERTH
AUSSIES WHO LIVED WITH / AFFECTED BY AN ENLARGED PROSTATE	
Glenn, 64	Former cabinet maker and father-to-two who spent five years feeling concerned about his enlarged prostate symptoms, SYDNEY
Barry, 65	Online business owner, father, and grandfather who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for 25 years, ORANGE
Dina, 63	Entrepreneur, mother, grandmother, and wife to Barry, who lived with an enlarged prostate, untreated, for 25 years, ORANGE
Dr Ethan, 60	General Practitioner and Senior University Lecturer who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for two years, BRISBANE
Ray, 75	Retired Chief Information Officer who experienced enlarged prostate symptoms for more than a year, BRISBANE
Grayham, 65	Small business owner and father who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for six years, MELBOURNE
Keith, 61	Professional engineer and father-to-two who lived with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for five years, ADELAIDE
Patrick, 59	Electrical technician and father-to-three who endured enlarged prostate symptoms for almost 10 years, PERTH
Bruce, 72	Former police officer and semi-retired IT Technician who endured symptoms of an enlarged prostate for more than a decade, WHEATBELT, WA
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