

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

A common, non-cancerous prostate condition affecting more than 2.8 million Aussie 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 16 per cent of Aussie men aged 50+ 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, Aussie 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 (64 per cent) affected Aussie men.⁴ A concerning 58 per cent experience an urgent need to pee, while 61 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 nearly two in five (39 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 more than half (53 per cent) of those living with an enlarged prostate, needing to know the location of the closest toilets causes feelings of anxiety, with almost one in five (18 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 Specialist Urological Surgeon at The Wesley Hospital, Dr Jo Schoeman, Brisbane, 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

"A normal prostate varies in size. Because there is no defined relationship between prostate size and symptom severity,¹⁴ even men with a small prostate enlargement may experience significant urinary symptoms.

"As the prostate grows, it causes obstruction and can block the bladder, resulting in a need to urinate frequently, and disrupting urine outflow,"¹⁵ Dr Schoeman said.

“Untreated symptoms may also lead to urinary tract infections, kidney stones and kidney damage,¹⁰ reinforcing the importance of early, proactive medical advice.

“Importantly, an enlarged prostate, and its associated symptoms, are treatable,”¹⁶ said Dr Schoeman.

“Men living with symptoms of the condition should seek professional advice and explore effective treatment options with their doctor.

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

Online business owner, father-to-five boys, and grandfather-to-three, Barry, 65, Orange, wrestled with progressive symptoms of an enlarged prostate for 25 years – frequent, and incomplete bladder emptying; a weak urine flow; persistent urination throughout the night; and minimal control over his bladder and bowel movements. These symptoms proved particularly “embarrassing and uncomfortable,” and over time, compromised his physical and mental wellbeing and forced him to “retract from life.”

“The urgency to pee was my most challenging symptom. When you have an enlarged prostate, especially one that was as large as mine – the size of a softball – and you get a signal, you've only got a few seconds to find a toilet.

“This leaves you constantly thinking about the location of the nearest toilet, and how quickly you can reach it,” Barry said.

“In fact, my prostate was so large, it pressed on nerves and triggered further health issues. It affected my bowel movements and intimate relations with my wife.”

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

“Aussie men are proud. The first sign of any men's health problem is considered a weakness or compromising of our masculinity. So, we tend to suffer in silence.

“That's why nowadays, I ask every man who I come across about their prostate, because most men won't even discuss it with their partner,” said Barry.

“If you're living with symptoms of an enlarged prostate, visit your GP before they get worse.”

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, <i>MELBOURNE</i>
Mr Tony de Sousa	Consultant Urological Surgeon, Epworth Freemasons Hospital, St John of God Berwick Hospital, Mulgrave Private Hospital, and Beleura Private Hospital, Mornington, <i>MELBOURNE</i>
Dr Kapil Sethi	Urological and Robotic Surgeon, <i>MELBOURNE AND SHEPPARTON</i>
Prof Henry Woo	Director of Uro-Oncology; Head of Robotic Surgery, Chris O'Brien Lifehouse; and Urology Department Head, Blacktown Mount Druitt Hospital, <i>SYDNEY</i>
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, <i>SYDNEY</i>
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, <i>BRISBANE</i>
Dr Borjana Barth	Urological Surgeon and Uro-Oncologist, Sunshine Coast University Private Hospital, and Sunshine Coast University Hospital, <i>SUNSHINE COAST</i>
Dr James Aspinall	Specialist Urologist, The Royal Adelaide Hospital, <i>ADELAIDE</i>
Dr Elayne Ooi	Principal and Consultant Urologist Surgeon, Swan Urology; Consultant Urologist, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital; and Visiting Medical Practitioner, Hollywood Private Hospital, <i>PERTH</i>
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, <i>SYDNEY</i>
Barry, 65	Online business owner, father, and grandfather who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for 25 years, <i>ORANGE</i>
Dina, 63	Entrepreneur, mother, grandmother, and wife to Barry, who lived with an enlarged prostate, untreated, for 25 years, <i>ORANGE</i>
Dr Ethan, 60	General Practitioner and Senior University Lecturer who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for two years, <i>BRISBANE</i>
Ray, 75	Retired Chief Information Officer who experienced enlarged prostate symptoms for more than a year, <i>BRISBANE</i>
Graham, 65	Small business owner and father who wrestled with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for six years, <i>MELBOURNE</i>
Keith, 61	Professional engineer and father-to-two who lived with symptoms of an enlarged prostate for five years, <i>ADELAIDE</i>
Patrick, 59	Electrical technician and father-to-three who endured enlarged prostate symptoms for almost 10 years, <i>PERTH</i>
Bruce, 72	Former police officer and semi-retired IT Technician who endured symptoms of an enlarged prostate for more than a decade, <i>WHEATBELT, WA</i>
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