

HIFU

the alternative treatment for prostate cancer

Lawrie De La Rue never had any indications that he was about to face a health battle, but a routine PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) blood test showed the presence of cancer.

Placed in the hands of Cabrini Urologist, Dr Peter Royce, the next step was a prostate biopsy ... its pathology, using the standard Gleason Score, indicated fairly aggressive prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer affects more than 18,000 men in Australia every year. If diagnosed in its early stages, before it has spread, it can be favourably treated.

More common in men over 50, younger men can't be complacent if there is a family history of prostate cancer.

Part of the male reproductive system, the prostate is located below the bladder and in front of the bowel. If there is a problem, men usually notice several things: Difficulty or pain while urinating, a constant and urgent need to urinate, blood in the urine or sexual dysfunction.

For men, a prostate check should always form part of an annual medical examination.

Encouraged to be actively involved in selecting his treatment, Lawrie discussed a range of options with Dr Royce including surgery and



Brachytherapy where radioactive seeds are inserted into the prostate to kill the tumour. In the end, Lawrie opted for HIFU (High Intensity Focused Ultrasound).

"I believe it is the least intrusive with less risk of further complications that may have affected my lifestyle and quality of life. During my recovery everything went according to plan except, in some instances, I expected a little worse than I actually experienced. I thought I would have a lot more discomfort and, as it turned out, I didn't need to take any painkillers. I feel great and my friends tell me how well I look," said an elated Lawrie.

Cabrini's Dr Peter Royce was the first Urologist in Melbourne to use HIFU for the treatment of prostate cancer, although it has been extensively used overseas for some years.

HIFU is fast, effective and requires only an overnight stay in hospital. The robotic technology is multi-functional and minimally invasive. While under general anaesthesia, a probe is inserted into the rectum to provide images of the prostate, the seminal vesicles, bladder, rectum

and urethra. HIFU treatment then begins with high intensity ultrasound beams precisely focused to destroy the cancerous tissue.

"The precision of HIFU without damage to surrounding organs and tissue is an important feature of the technology. It means that there is faster recovery and less risk of other long-term complications for patients such as incontinence. That's got to be a huge bonus," said Dr. Royce.

He can support his faith in the use of HIFU for prostate cancer, having recorded clinical data to assess cancer outcomes and quality of life since he began using the technology four years ago. Of the 80 patients Dr Royce has treated, 83% have excellent cancer control, 96% are continent and don't have to use pads, and 60% have retained normal sexual function.

HIFU is a viable alternative to robotic surgery or radiation therapy. In fact, it can be used to treat patients who have undergone unsuccessful external radiation, even if the cancer has recurred some years later. And, should HIFU treatment prove unsuccessful, it does not present a barrier to surgery.