PSA Screening in Lewiston Maine

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PSA Screening at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, Maine

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PSA screening to detect early asymptomatic prostate cancer is a controversial practice. While screening has been shown to increase detection years earlier than symptoms develop, a mortality benefit has been harder to show. The practice also leads to many false positive results and unnecessary biopsies.

Both the USPSTF and American Urological Association currently recommend the choice to screen in average risk individuals be based off the personal values and goals of the patient.

This is a complicated decision to make as a patient and a difficult conversation to facilitate for the doctor because there is good evidence for and against the practice.
• Prostate Cancer is the most common cancer that affects men and is the second leading cause of cancer death in men.

• PSA-based screening programs in men ages 55 to 69 years may prevent up to 1 to 2 deaths from prostate cancer over approximately 13 years per 1,000 men screened. Screening programs may also prevent up to 3 cases of metastatic prostate cancer per 1,000 men screened over 13 years.

• Follow-up of large randomized trials suggests that 20% to 50% of men diagnosed with prostate cancer through screening may be “over-diagnosed” (treatment of cancer that would never have been symptomatic).
Dr. Jordan Kurta, a Urologist at CMMC, believes that PSA screening is an effective tool to help assess prostate cancer risk but acknowledges that different physicians use this tool differently.

Family Medicine Physicians at CMMC currently use the AUA and USPSTF recommendations to discuss PSA screening with their patients and initiate screening based on these conversations.

Given the recent changes in recommendations from the USPSTF in both 2012 and 2017 it can be hard to keep up with the most recent evidence.
Intervention and Methodology

- A short, easy to read handout that patients can use to help them understand the risks and benefits of choosing to screen covering the following topics
  - Personal risk factors
  - Potential side effects of treatment
  - Risk of false positives and unnecessary treatment
Results/Response

- A take-home handout for patients to review the risks and benefits of PSA screening and how their own personal values effect the choice to screen.

- Refresher handout of the USPSTF and AUA's most recent recommendations for PSA testing for providers at CMMC family medicine residency.
Effectiveness and Limitations

- Handout allows patient’s to digest the information at their own pace.
- Educating patient’s ahead of time to decrease the time providers must spend on education of a complicated topic during the office visit.
- Potential to create circular discussion between providers and patients.
• Recommendations change constantly as new evidence emerges and new clinical tools are found and evaluated. Patient education materials will have to change with new understanding of prostate cancer screening.

• Assess efficacy of handout by Family Physicians. Does the information help patient’s feel comfortable in their decision or generate more questions and anxiety around making and living with a choice?
References


- Hoffman, Richard M. “Screening for Prostate Cancer.” Up To Date, 14 Sept. 2017