

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

A common, non-cancerous prostate condition affecting almost 577,000 Queensland 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 concerning, the condition is currently under-diagnosed and under-treated,⁷ with new research confirming only 17 per cent of Queensland 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, Queensland 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 more than half (57 per cent) of affected Queensland men.⁴

A concerning 57 per cent experience an urgent need to pee, while 57 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 two in five (42 per cent) Queensland 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 almost half (48 per cent) of those living with an enlarged prostate, needing to know the location of the closest toilets causes feelings of anxiety, with more than one in five (22 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) 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

S100 General Practitioner (GP), Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine, The University of Queensland (UQ), and Veterinarian, Dr Ethan, 60, Brisbane, was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate in 2020, after experiencing incomplete bladder emptying, a weak stream, and nocturia (frequent night-time urination) symptoms for two years. He carried two risk factors for the disease – ageing, and a family history – noting all of his uncles lived with an enlarged prostate.

Despite having managed many patients living with an enlarged prostate, Dr Ethan nonetheless, chose to ignore his own symptoms for some time, attributing them to "normal ageing", and "getting on with life", because "that is what we, men my age, do." Over time, his symptoms grew progressively worse, and took a huge toll on Dr Ethan's physical and mental wellbeing.

"I have a busy and demanding job as a doctor, so waking up really tired after an awful night's sleep with nocturia began to compromise my happy nature, and affected my evening gym sessions. I started to get cranky," Dr Ethan said.

Dr Ethan finally chose to pursue a minimally invasive treatment option, that worked for him.

“If not treated early, the bladder may become weakened as it tries to push against the pressure. The bladder wall may eventually become irreversibly thickened, and ineffective in pushing urine out, leading to urinary tract infections, and kidney damage, as urine pools in the bladder and backs up into the kidneys.

“That’s why timely treatment of an enlarged prostate is so important,” said Dr Ethan.

“If you’re experiencing any enlarged prostate symptoms, please don’t be afraid to seek help.

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 an enlarged prostate, 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

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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
AUSSIES WHO LIVED WITH / AFFECTED BY AN ENLARGED PROSTATE	
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
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