

Bladder cancer survivor, surgeon team up for charity

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UPDATED MON FEB 27 18:58:40 EST 2017



PHOTO Tony Moore hopes the foundation will boost awareness about the potentially fatal cancer.

ABC NEWS: WAYNE CHAPMAN

A bladder cancer survivor has teamed up with his urologist to create a new charity and deliver free Australian education resource for patients after frustration about the lack of local information available.

The Bladder Cancer Australia Charity Foundation aims to raise awareness of the disease, which it said was the fourth most common cancer in Australian men — despite receiving little attention.

About 3,000 Australians are diagnosed with bladder cancer each year, and urological surgeon Nathan Lawrentschuk said it was one of the hardest cancers to treat if detected late.

Associate Professor Lawrentschuk said he had teamed up with one of his former patients, Melbourne musician Tony Moore, in a bid to increase early detection rates.



PHOTO [Urologist Nathan Lawrentschuk and cancer survivor Tony Moore launched the charity in Canberra.](#)

SUPPLIED: BROOKE JONES

Mr Moore was diagnosed with advanced invasive bladder cancer in November 2011 after ignoring his symptoms for six months.

"The first thing I noticed was that my urine was sitting a little bit heavier in the bowl, my urine had changed," he said.

"I was diagnosed and I started searching over the internet for more information about my disease and there was precious little available in Australia."

As a smoker, Mr Moore said he was among 70 per cent of all bladder cancer patients with a history of smoking.

Mr Moore lost his bladder to the cancer but underwent an operation where a portion of his bowel was fashioned into a new reservoir.

Foundation created out of frustration: urologist

Five years after recovering from the surgery, Mr Moore teamed up with Associate Professor Lawrentschuk to provide patient education, awareness, research and support.



PHOTO Urologist Nathan Lawrentschuk is hoping to raise public awareness about bladder cancer.
ABC NEWS: IAN CUTMORE

Associate Professor Lawrentschuk said the foundation was mostly created out of frustration.

"Bladder cancer has a very poor profile compared to other malignancies such as prostate cancer and breast cancer," he said.

"It is not a 'glamorous' malignancy and there are no high profile people who have been diagnosed with it."

He said bladder cancer was the fifth most common malignancy in men and about the 10th most common in women.

"It effects men three to one over women," Professor Lawrentschuk said.

"But interestingly, because of the continued need for surveillance and intervention, it is the second most expensive malignancy that the health system has to endure.

"We would like federal, local and regional government support for the foundation."


If you see red, act now

Mr Moore and Associate Professor Nathan Lawrentschuk are both in Canberra this week to attend the Urological Society of Australia and New Zealand's Annual Scientific Meeting.

It was there they launched the charity's first initiative — a free print book about the cancer specifically created for Australian patients and healthcare providers.

Associate Professor Lawrentschuk said too often patients had little information to make life-changing decisions and if resources were not readily available, the cancer could become fatal.

He said blood in the urine was present in 80 per cent of bladder cancer cases, but was often overlooked.

 "Just like a traffic light, if you see red you need to stop and reconsider what's happening," he said.

"A trip to your GP is going to be the best way to get assessment of this."

POSTED MON FEB 27 07:01:42 EST 2017

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