

A study of the effect of ethnicity on prostate cancer familiarity and survival of men with prostate cancer in the United Kingdom

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Research in the USA has shown that men with a family history of prostate cancer (PrCa), and men from certain minority ethnic groups are at higher risk of developing PrCa. However, within the UK there has been little research into PrCa risk in different ethnic groups.

We have investigated, in UK patients, whether there are differences in familial risk, clinical presentation, and survival of non-white PrCa groups from various ethnic backgrounds (n=146 men) compared with a white PrCa group (n=2032). Data were collected on family history of cancer, and age, stage, grade, Gleason score and PSA level at diagnosis.

Contrary to the USA findings, when analysed statistically, no strong differences were seen between the white and non-white groups in this study; results provided no conclusive evidence to support the hypothesis that ethnicity of men has a negative effect on survival. However, those men who chose not to state their ethnicity had a consistently worse survival than men who declared their ethnicity, while men with a known family history of PrCa and/or cancer(s) were found to survive longer than men who did not know any family history details.

Since non-disclosure of ethnicity, and knowledge of family history may affect survival, further research is needed in the UK population to assess the degree of increased risk within different ethnic groups.