

# LET'S TALK ABOUT PROSTATE HEALTH, MAN!

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Sadly, the stereotype is true: Men are much more interested in talking about sports, women, cars and their careers than their own health rationalizing that “what you don't know won't hurt you.”



What they don't realize is that their lack of interest — in their health — actually contributes to the things they fear most: illness and even death.

“One of the best ways to fight the disease is to catch it in the early stages. The problem is that the warning signs for many life-threatening diseases may seem pretty harmless,” explained Dr. Marie Carmela Lapitan, regional medical expert for the emerging markets in urology at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Philippines. “Take for example the Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH).”

BPH is a common disease that causes the prostate to increase in size as a man ages. Although not malignant or cancerous, BPH is a progressive disease.

“As men reach the age of 40, their prostate gland starts growing. The prostate gland encircles the urethra and as it expands it ‘chokes’ the latter making it hard for men to urinate,” Dr. Lapitan said.

In the Philippines, 24 percent of Filipino men aged 50 to 59 years old suffer from at least moderate symptoms of BPH. Whether it is incontinence or painful urination, this will definitely hinder the way a person lives.

“Patients affected by BPH often have to deal with sleep disruption and sexual dysfunction. Their daily activities and outdoor trips are also limited and can be a source of embarrassment,” noted Dr. Lapitan.

“BPH can also lead to Acute Urinary Retention (AUR) and may require surgery.”

WHEN IT COMES TO PROSTATE HEALTH, IT'S ‘FUN TO BE WISE’

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Philippines, a global leading healthcare company, marked the World BPH Day recently through “FUN to be WISE on BPH,” an advocacy that's aimed at raising awareness about the disease and help improve the quality of life of Filipino men.

“Prostate health is something we don't often discuss or read about. But the statistics are alarming: 24 percent of men aged 50 and above suffer from BPH with mild symptoms and some of them do not even know they have it,” lamented Dr. Jay Javier of GSK.

“FUNWISE” is actually an acronym, which is based on the International Prostate Symptom Score, for the BPH symptoms men need to watch out for:

- F is for Frequency. Over the past two months, how often have you had to urinate two hours after you finished urinating?

- U for Urgency. Over the past month, how often have you found it difficult to postpone urination?
- N for Nocturia. Over the past month, how many times do you typically get up at night to urinate?
- W for Weak stream. Over the past month, how often have you had a weak urinary system?
- I for Intermittency. Over the past month, how often have you found yourself to have stopped and started again while you were urinating?
- S for Straining. Over the past month, how often have you had to push or strain to begin to urinate?
- E for Incomplete Emptying. Over the past month, how often have you had a sensation of not emptying a bladder completely after you finish urinating?

“If you’re experiencing even just one of these symptoms, go to your doctor,” advised Dr. Lapitan. “Once a BPH patient is assessed by a doctor, he may undergo a simple urine test to see whether he has infection or other urological problems. The simplest way of checking if the patient has enlarged prostate is by inserting a finger into his rectum.”

For BPH treatment, Lapitan said medical and surgical treatments are available in the Philippines.

“There’s a medication that relaxes the muscles of the prostate gland so it opens up the urethra — for the urine to flow better,” she added.

There is also a group of drugs that can shrink the prostate, thus eliminating the need for surgery.

“We hope that through GSK’s ‘FUN to be WISE’ campaign, the men and the women in their lives will be more open to talk about prostate help and take action,” added Dr. Lapitan.

So enough with the machismo, gentlemen! Don’t wait until a problem or symptom becomes unbearable before having yourself checked by a physician.

And yes, when it comes to prostate health, it’s “FUN to be WISE.”

One of the best ways to fight Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is to catch it in the early stages. Know what symptoms to watch out for.