

Smoking is tied to more aggressive form of prostate cancer—study

BusinessMirror · 22 Sep 2022 · B4 · By Claudeth Mocon-ciriaco

PROSTATE cancer is the fifth leading cancer site and third leading cause of cancer deaths among Filipino males, the Department of Health (Doh) said, citing the 2020 data from the Global Cancer Observatory (GCO). September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Cancer Society in 2015 said that about six in 10 cases are diagnosed in men aged 65 or older. The average age at the time of diagnosis is 66 years old.

“The chances of developing prostate cancer increase as you get older,” said Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, a trustee of HealthJustice Philippines, a non-government organization.

However, Dr. Galvez Tan noted that prostate cancer can be detected early through testing such as using a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) or through a digital rectal exam (DRE).

The prostate is a small gland in the pelvis that’s found only in men. It’s located between the penis and the bladder and surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder to the penis.

Dr. Galvez Tan added that prostate cancer may be defeated by regular screening.

“And there are multiple treatment options,” Dr. Galvez Tan said, citing radical prostatectomy or radiation therapy, hormonal therapy, brachytherapy, cryotherapy, and high-intensity focused ultrasound therapy.

He said that to avoid health risks from any type of cancer, smoking should be stopped or should not be started in the first place.

He stressed that smoking has at least 70 chemicals that can cause cancer.

Smoking and prostate cancer

STUDIES shown that men with prostate cancer who smoke may be more likely to die from prostate cancer than nonsmokers.

An article of Harvard Health Publishing titled “Smoking tied to more aggressive prostate cancer,” a research published by an Austrian team in 2018, stated that another reason to quit smoking is the fact that in addition to raising your risk of heart and lung disease, as well as cancers of the bladder and kidney, smoking could boost the odds that you will develop aggressive prostate cancer that metastasizes, or spreads through your body.

Published in 2014, the research showed that smokers had a 24 percent higher risk of death from prostate cancer than nonsmokers.

But it left an open question—did the men who died from these other causes also have high-grade prostate cancers that had not yet been detected? Experts suspected that since smoking kills in different ways, some of those who pick up the habit simply may not live long enough to die from prostate cancer.

“After roughly six years of follow-up, the data told a clear story: prostate cancer patients who smoked were nearly twice as likely to die of their disease (89 percent higher risk) than nonsmokers. In addition, the risk that their cancers would spread was 151 percent higher, and there was a 40 percent higher risk that their prostate-specific antigen levels would rise again after surgery, signaling the cancer’s return,” the article stated.

Prostate cancer does not normally cause any symptoms until the cancer has grown large enough to put pressure on the urethra. This normally results in problems associated with urination.

Symptoms can also include having a sudden need to urinate, pain during urination, frequent urination especially during the night, the flow of your urine is weak and irregular, having problems beginning urination, feeling that your bladder is not empty after urination, and less commonly, blood in your urine.