Andrology Australia has revamped its website at www.andrologyaustralia.org, so that men can have easier access to information on male reproductive health. The new website reflects a slight change in Andrology Australia’s branding with the addition of our tagline ‘what every man needs to know’.

The aim of the new look is to keep the functionality of the original website, but to make it easier for consumers and health professionals to access a range of education and health promotion resources on male reproductive health and associated conditions.

It provides greater interactivity with the addition of videos, and allows users to easily share the content via social media and email. The site has been split into three key sections, one for general men’s health information titled ‘Your health’, one for health professionals, and one for community groups and those wishing to run men’s health events.

“We have tried to increase the use of videos and other interactive tools so that men from all backgrounds can access the site and get important health information,” Andrology Australia CEO Dr Carol Holden said.

Receiving more than a million hits and over 60,000 visitors a month, the Andrology Australia website provides the most comprehensive information on male reproductive health disorders in the country.

We welcome any feedback, so please email info@andrologyaustralia.org if you have any comments or suggestions.
Welcome to our first edition for 2012. It’s already been a busy year for the Andrology Australia team with the launch of the new-look website. We hope that you enjoy the re-design and the new features, including more videos and easier ways to share content. A particular favourite video of mine is of the Ambassador Program which shows Merv Hughes in action, delivering men’s health messages in regional Australia.

On that note, it’s ‘tackle time’ again and Andrology Australia is preparing to send out free resources for community groups and health organisations holding men’s health events in 2012. If you are running a men’s health event this year, take a look at the ‘Community’ section of the Andrology Australia website, which has a whole range of helpful information.

The focus of this issue of The Healthy Male is prostate cancer treatment, or more particularly androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). This type of treatment has become more widely used in recent years. This edition is aimed at people who are already well into their prostate cancer journey or those who are looking at their options for treatment. We hope it will be informative and helpful.

Professor Rob McLachlan

Health spot - Prostate Enlargement or BPH

WHAT IS BPH?
BPH refers to benign prostatic hyperplasia, the non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate. BPH is the most common prostate disease in men and is not linked to prostate cancer.

As the prostate is positioned around the urinary tract, the enlargement of the prostate makes the urinary tract narrow and puts pressure on the base of the bladder.

HOW COMMON IS BPH?
BPH can start after the age of 40 and becomes more common as men get older. It affects nearly all men, though some men do not have any symptoms even though their prostate may have started to grow larger.

BPH usually becomes more of a problem over time, with symptoms getting worse if they are not treated. An Australian study showed that one in seven men aged over 40 years reported being diagnosed with prostate disease. About two in every three men over the age of 40 with prostate disease have had treatment.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?
A number of men with BPH may not have many or any symptoms of the disease. The men who do have symptoms of BPH usually find that there are noticeable changes to their urination because BPH affects the part of the prostate that surrounds the top part of the urinary tract. LUTS (lower urinary tract symptom) is a common term used to describe a range of symptoms such as dribbling, hesitancy and urgency, that are linked to BPH. Overactivity of the bladder muscle can also cause LUTS.
Androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), formerly called hormone therapy, is a treatment that works well for many men with prostate cancer. Doctors will talk about the use of ADT with men who have certain kinds of prostate cancer, or when prostate cancer progresses.

When talking with your doctor or medical team, you need to think about the benefits of ADT and the risks of the side-effects to decide if and when to include ADT in your treatment.

For men who are treated with ADT, there are things they can do, and things the doctor can do, to help prevent or manage some of the side-effects.

What is ADT?
ADT is sometimes used in the treatment for prostate cancer. It acts by either stopping testosterone production or by blocking the action of testosterone on the cells and tissues.

The growth of normal prostate cells and prostate cancer cells relies on male hormones (androgens), the most important of which is testosterone.

What else does testosterone do in the male body?
Testosterone plays a key role in reproductive and sexual function. It is responsible for producing the physical characteristics of male puberty such as penis development and testicular growth, and for those features typical of adult men such as facial and body hair. Testosterone also stimulates cells in the testes to produce sperm.

Testosterone also plays an important role in the growth of bones and muscles, and affects mood, sex drive and certain aspects of mental ability.

What types of ADT are available?
The most common form of ADT used today is a group of medicines called gonadotrophin-releasing-hormone (GnRH) agonists. These medicines stop the pituitary gland stimulating the production of testosterone by the testes. These are given by injection or as implants under the skin.

The production of testosterone can also be permanently stopped by the surgical removal of the testes (orchidectomy).
**What are the side-effects of ADT?**

Most men having ADT will have reduced libido (a lack of interest in sexual activity) and some trouble with getting or keeping erections. Other common side effects include:

- hot flushes
- tiredness and sweating
- changes in mood and decreased motivation
- cognitive changes such as memory problems and difficulty with doing more than one thing at a time
- reduced bone substance and muscle strength, which get worse over time
- weight gain
- breast development and/or nipple soreness
- gradual decrease in body hair

Studies are now showing that men on ADT also have a higher chance of developing diabetes and cardiovascular diseases such as heart disease or stroke.

**How are side-effects managed?**

It is important to talk to your doctor about any side-effects that may happen. There are guidelines for doctors to help men keep their bones healthy during ADT and to manage cardiovascular health.

**What bone problems are linked to ADT?**

Men being treated with ADT have a higher chance of reduced bone mineral density (BMD) (thinning of the bones) and they may develop osteoporosis. Reduced bone density and osteoporosis are linked to a higher risk of bone fractures, especially in the hip and spine.

The effect of ADT on bone health can begin within months after starting ADT and usually gets worse if a man has long-term ADT (over several years).

**How are bone problems managed?**

There are things that men can do, and treatments they can be given, to reduce the risk of osteoporosis and fractures. These include:

- lifestyle behaviours including regular weight-bearing physical activity, no smoking and reduced alcohol intake
- increased calcium in the diet and calcium supplements (tablets or injections)
- vitamin D supplements, if needed, to keep vitamin D levels in the normal range
- treatment with bone-specific medicines for men with low BMD, a history of fractures, or men thought to be at high risk of a fracture in the future.

Men can talk to their doctor to find the best way to look after their bone health while being treated with ADT.

**What are the effects on body weight and the risk of developing diabetes or heart disease?**

Men on ADT may find that their muscles become smaller and they have an increase in body fat, especially around the abdominal (stomach) area. This increases the chance of developing diabetes or heart disease.

Studies of ADT and diabetes have shown that men using ADT for more than a year are at higher risk of developing diabetes, but the increased risk has not been seen in men on ADT for a shorter time.

As men get older, their risk of developing heart disease or having a stroke (cardiovascular risk) increases. Therefore men starting on ADT may already be at higher risk of cardiovascular disease due to their age.

There are things that men can do, and treatments they can be given, to lower the risk of weight gain, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. These include:

- regular exercise and a healthy diet to prevent weight gain
- no smoking
- blood pressure treatment for raised blood pressure
- medicine for raised cholesterol
- diabetes medicine to control high blood glucose levels
- aspirin therapy for men found to be at high risk of cardiovascular disease by a doctor.

*This article was developed by Andrology Australia*
Get set for International Men’s Health Week 2012 and talk ‘tackle’

International Men’s Health Week (June 11-17) is a great time to raise the awareness and support the health and wellbeing of the men in your local community.

Whether it’s a display in your local library, workplace, community health centre, shopping mall or a full-blown event with guest speakers and activities, doing something for men in your community will remind everyone of the importance of looking after their health.

Each year, Andrology Australia provides themed resources at no charge to support the hundreds of communities across the country that show their support for men’s health.

In 2012, the theme for our resources is ‘Time to talk tackle’. This year the focus is again on encouraging men to talk about the ‘bits below the belt’, particularly with their doctors.

For IMHW 2012, we are producing promotional posters and a four-page health brochure which can be ordered now for delivery in late-March/early-April.

To order these resources for your event, head to the ‘Community’ section of the new Andrology Australia website and look for ‘Men’s health events’. Alternatively, call 1300 303 878 and place your order over the phone (cost of a local call).

You can also sign up to a monthly men’s health events e-newsletter, which gives tricks and tips on ways to make your community men’s health event the best it can be.

Men and their partners need to be prepared for the side-effects of ADT

Many men have androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) as part of their treatment for prostate cancer. There are important side-effects that may happen with ADT including hot flashes, tiredness, loss of muscle mass, weight gain and loss of sexual desire. There is also a higher chance of osteoporosis, diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

It is important for men to be informed about the treatment and its possible effects, as well as the monitoring and prevention activities that can help while on the treatment.

A recent study published in Urologic Oncology1 of 79 Canadian men (aged 57 to 87 years) who had recently started ADT, and 54 of their partners, showed poor knowledge of the side-effects of ADT.

Between 60 and 90 percent of participants were not aware of known side effects such as changes in memory, loss of body hair, osteoporosis and depression.

Other symptoms such as itching, dizziness or insomnia, that are not well-established side effects of ADT, were mistakenly thought to be common by up to 35 percent of men (and fewer partners).

The study findings relate to Canadian men but may also apply in Australia. Keeping in mind that it was a small study at only one time point, the findings support what patients have told the authors in practice: that they would like to have been better prepared for the effects of ADT before treatment started.

The study highlights the need for men and their doctors to talk about side-effects and what can be done to prevent or relieve symptoms if they happen.

New warning about erectile medicine
The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) has issued a warning about buying ‘herbal’ erectile drugs online after several safety alerts since July 2011. The TGA has also identified or received reports of prescription medicines being included in herbal products bought overseas and advertised on the internet, which when taken at high doses can result in severe hypoglycaemia and death.

E-bulletin for health professionals
If you are a health professional, sign up to our e-bulletin ‘Male Briefs’ for all the latest news about men’s health research and professional events. Health professionals can also order a free set of our Clinical Summary Guides for the diagnosis and management of male reproductive health conditions. Visit the ‘Health professionals’ section of our website for details.

Connect with Andrology Australia via social media
Andrology Australia has profiles on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Please “follow”, “like” or “subscribe” to connect with us and stay informed on the latest happenings in men’s health.

Using Andrology Australia material
If you would like to republish articles from The Healthy Male please contact info@andrologyaustralia.org, or call 1300 303 878.

In brief

Latest News

Milestone for men’s health awareness – ‘A User’s Guide’

It’s time to celebrate! Andrology Australia’s most popular resource, ‘A User’s Guide’ has now been distributed to more than 250,000 people across the country. ‘A User’s Guide’ is an eight-page brochure which explains the male reproductive system and what can go wrong, in a simple and straightforward way.

It was first produced in 2004 to accompany Andrology Australia’s ‘What every man needs to know’ campaign.

To order ‘A User’s Guide’ please visit our website or call 1300 303 878.

NEWSLETTER OF ANDROLOGY AUSTRALIA
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