

## E. David Crawford, M.D.

### Heart Risk Factors Tied to Cancer Survival



#### Prostate cancer patients with metabolic risk factors have higher mortality risks

A group of health factors, such as high blood pressure and obesity, can lead to heart disease. They may also increase the risk of prostate cancer. Metabolic syndrome is a collection of health factors that includes high blood pressure, high blood sugar, obesity, elevated blood-fat levels and a body-mass index (BMI) that is above normal. While these health risk factors have been associated with heart disease and diabetes, an extensive new study has shown these metabolic characteristics indicate an increased risk of dying from prostate cancer.

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The study, however, found no evidence of a link between high levels of metabolic factors and a man's risk of developing prostate cancer. This suggests men with metabolic syndrome are not more likely than others to develop prostate cancer, but if they do develop it, they are more likely to die from the malignancy.

Par Stattin, MD, a visiting doctor at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, led researchers from Umea University in Sweden. They reviewed health information on 289,866 men enrolled in a study called the Metabolic syndrome and Cancer (Me-Can) project. The subjects in Me-Can were from Norway, Sweden, and Austria. BMI is a height-to-weight ratio that is often used to determine if a person is overweight.

Over the course of 12 years, 6,673 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer and 961 died from the disease. Men with the highest BMI had a 36 percent greater chance of dying compared to those at a normal weight. Men with the highest level blood pressure had a 62 percent greater chance of dying compared to those with a normal blood pressure.

When all metabolic factors were taken into consideration, men with the highest overall scores were more likely to die from prostate cancer than men who had normal readings. E. David Crawford, MD, professor of surgery, urology and radiation oncology, and head of the Section of Urologic Oncology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center Anschutz Medical Campus, told dailyRx News, "Metabolic syndrome is becoming more common as our population becomes more obese and packs on abdominal fat. This is why waist circumference measurement is an important part of the physical exam."

He added that metabolic syndrome is associated in some men with a lower testosterone, and studies are ongoing with testosterone replacement therapy to see if some of the factors associated with the metabolic syndrome like diabetes are improved. Although investigators in this study found a link between these metabolic factors and an increased chance of dying from prostate cancer, they did not find an association between these high-risk characteristics and developing prostate cancer.

"These observations suggest cardiovascular risk factors such as overweight and hypertension are involved in stimulating the progression of prostate cancer," said Dr. Stattin. The research suggested that men who follow public health recommendations about diet, exercise and lifestyle could lower their likelihood of dying from prostate cancer. The study was published online on October 22 in the journal *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

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