

# Groundbreaking prostate cancer research being done in Manitoba



WINNIPEG — Each year, more than 26,000 Canadian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer. However, the chances of survival are good – especially if it is detected during its early stages.

The numbers were shocking enough to get hundreds of Manitobans on board to help raise money for research in the province through the annual [Ride for Dad](#) charity event.

“That first ride we had over 400 riders. I think we raised \$68,000 that first year,” said cancer survivor Ed Johner. “Last year we had 1,240 riders and raised \$285,000. To date we’ve raised \$1.1 million for prostate cancer research and awareness.”

The money stays in the province and is already having a major impact on advancing early diagnosis and treatment plans.

Partially due to those funds, CancerCare Manitoba has launched two aggressive clinical trials that could change the landscape of both prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Once prostate cancer is diagnosed, a series of biopsies has to be done to determine how serious the case is. These can be invasive and painful for the patient and may not give an accurate prognosis. It can also take months before doctors determine the best form of treatment and know how aggressive the cancer is.

Now a team of doctors and PhD students in Winnipeg are working to change that all through a simple blood test.

“With just a blood test, a simple blood sample, we can make a diagnosis about how severe the stage of

which the cancer is,” said Dr. Julius Awe.

“This project could help in diagnosing prostate cancer before the clinical symptoms show in the patient. It’s very early. Before it shows symptoms in the patient we can actually make a detection.”

The team is in it’s third year of research and is hopeful that with a few more years of clinical trials, this could become the standard test for diagnosis.

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“If we catch (it) earlier we can treat (it) faster and more effectively,” said Dr. Awe.

Worldwide, the incident of prostate cancer remains one of the highest of all cancers.

“One of every eight men are going to be diagnosed with prostate cancer,” said Dr. Awe. “One out of every 27 men is going to die from it.”

The second clinical trial that is currently underway in Manitoba could dramatically shift the treatment process for prostate cancer patients.

“We are going to test if patients, that are eligible, can get treatment in just one week time,” said lead researcher Dr. Rashmi Koul. Currently, “most of the people that are eligible for radiation traditionally get seven weeks of radiation, Monday to Friday.”

CancerCare Manitoba researchers will be entering the third phase of this clinical trial this summer and believe this will not only help with cutting down wait times but also costs.

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“It’s going to affect the whole system. Patients who are waiting four weeks, will then wait for two weeks. Patients who are waiting for two weeks will then wait for one week,” said Dr. Koul.

According to researchers, the cost of treatments could be reduced from \$7,000 to about \$1,500 if this eventually becomes the standard of care.

Once trials are completed it takes at least five years before the treatment could eventually become the standard.

“It’s just in the clinical trial but results are very promising,” she said. “It’s going to change the landscape of prostate cancer treatment.”

This year’s Ride for Dad event, which helps raise money for prostate cancer research, takes place May 28.

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