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The survival rates for prostate cancer are among the highest

What is your risk of prostate cancer?

So what's next?

The nights are drawing in and soon it will be the month of Movember, where fellas unite around the world to grow moustaches & raise awareness for male cancers.

This year the subject is so much closer to my heart, as on 2nd June 2014 my husband, Mark, was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

He was 49. This is young for this type of cancer. He had no symptoms - an anxiety attack took him to the doctor where she decided to give him an 'MOT'.

We were ignorant about this cancer - of course we'd heard of it, but naively associated it with the older generation. My hope is that by sharing this story you learn a bit more about this cancer, which in turn may help you or a loved one in future.

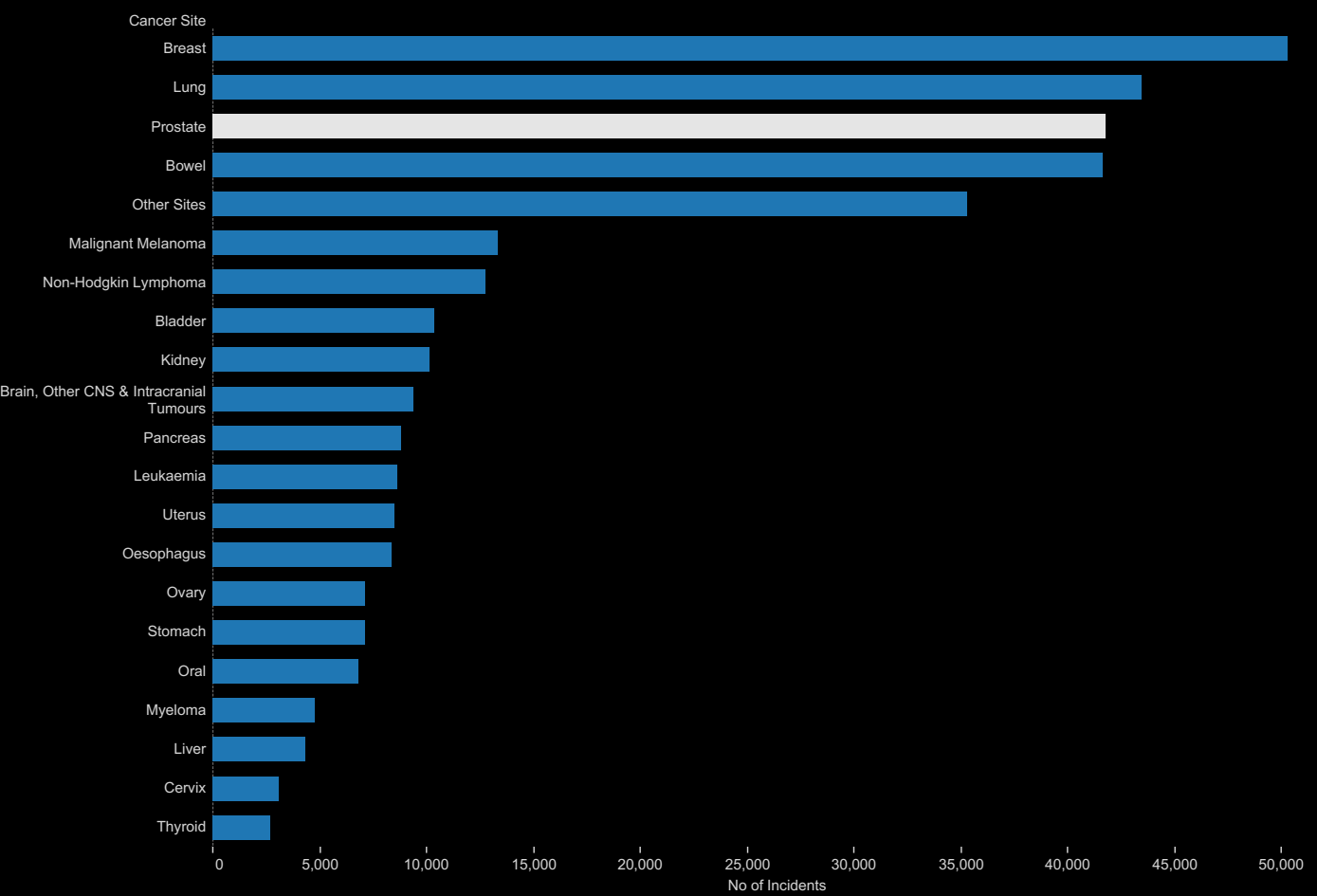


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Nearly everyone we told about Mark's diagnosis knew someone affected by prostate cancer. The encouraging news was that in most cases they were talking about survivors; people who'd been through it and come out the other side.

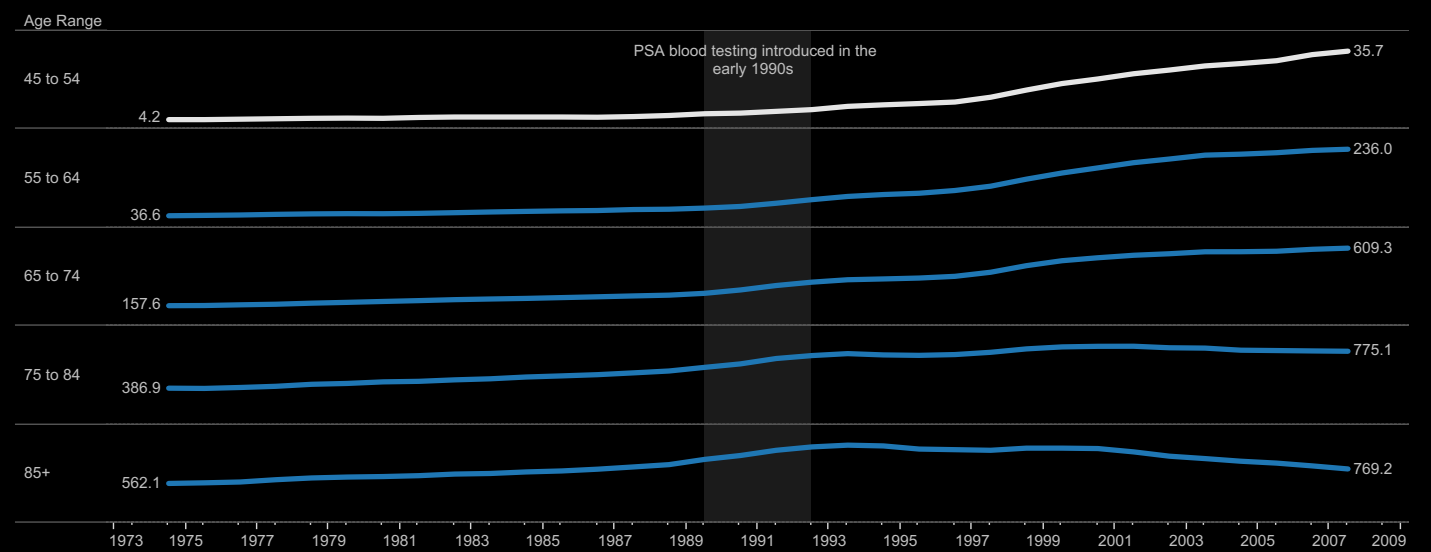
Cancer incidents by site in the UK in 2011



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Incident Rates in Great Britain by Age 1975-2011  
(rate per 100,000 people)



The PSA test is a blood test that measures the amount of prostate specific antigen (PSA) in your blood. PSA is a protein produced by the prostate. It is normal for all men to have a small amount of PSA in their blood, and this amount rises as you get older. But a raised PSA level may suggest you have a problem with your prostate (not necessarily cancer though). PSA blood testing was introduced in the early 1990s and so could be attributable for the increased rate in the younger age ranges. Earlier diagnosis may also be the reason diagnosis in the later age ranges is decreasing.

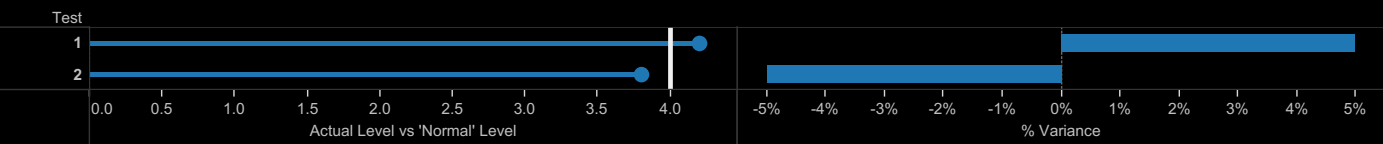
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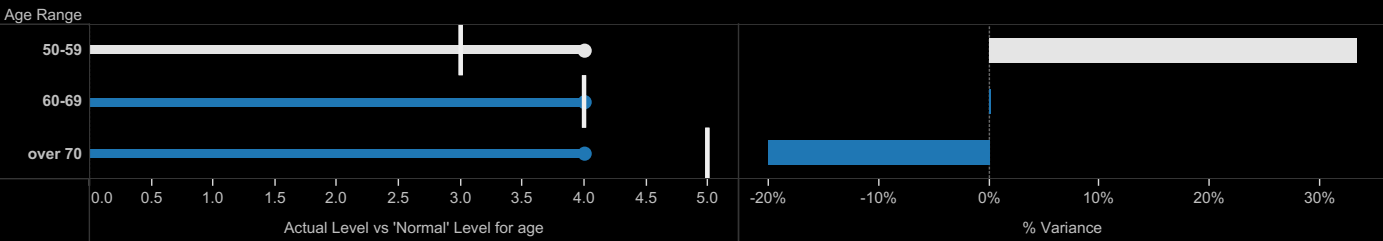
## Mark's Actual PSA Levels vs *Normal* Levels



Mark's 1st PSA test was reported to us as being 'just over' the *normal* value, so a 2nd test was carried out; this time it was 'just under'. Fortunately for us, Mark's doctor referred him to a consultant before receiving the results of the 2nd test; if not it could have been some time before we ever found out, and by then it could have been too late...



The consultant mentioned Mark's PSA levels as being 'very high', which seemed to contradict the information we'd received from the doctor. It appears there are different *normal* levels depending on age. There does not appear to be a definitive *normal* level for under 50. Mark's levels were the equivalent of a 60-69 year old. His levels were a third higher than the *norm* for his age (*nearly* 50).



Mark was diagnosed with locally advanced prostate cancer (Gleason score 7, stage T3a). This means the cancer had spread beyond the prostate capsule itself but had not spread to other organs (lymph nodes/bones). This is described as a cancer of 'intermediate risk' which his PSA levels reflect, and therefore treatment was necessary. On 28th July he had surgery to have his prostate removed.

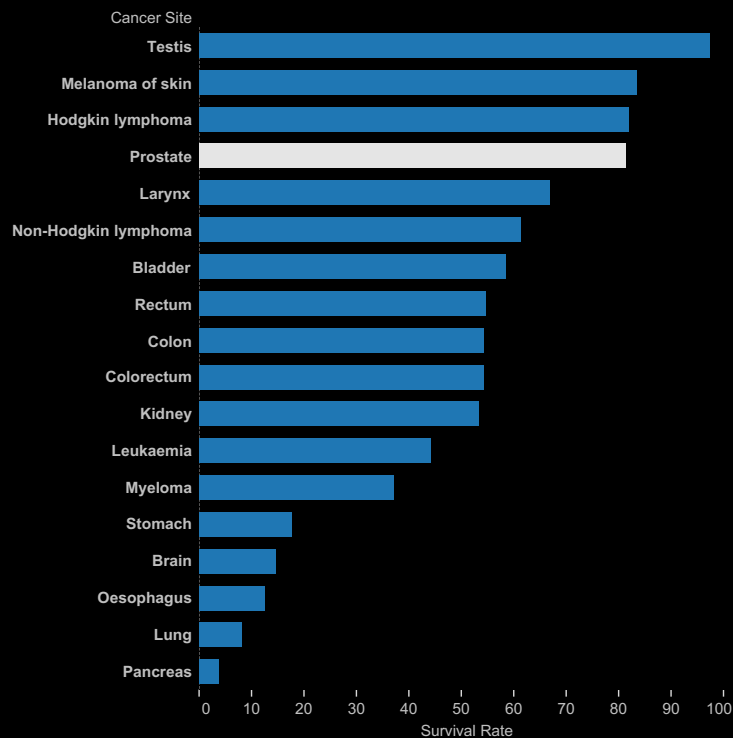
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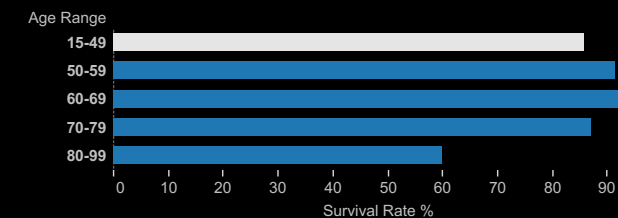
## 5 year relative survival rates for men in England diagnosed 2005-2009



Rate in relation to the most common cancers



Rate for prostate cancer by age at diagnosis



This is one of those areas I naturally don't want to dwell on right now, but it wouldn't have seemed right to omit from this brief insight into prostate cancer.

Unlike most cancers, the 5 year survival rate is slightly lower for men under 50 (which is the range Mark does theoretically fall into). Routine prostate checks typically happen from age 50 in the UK so the higher survival rates in the fifties & sixties are largely attributed to this and the introduction of PSA testing.

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This infographic is published on the Prostate Cancer UK website - I can't take any credit for this.

It summarises what you need to know (click to view the larger original version and access the Prostate Cancer UK website).

The main thing of course, is that **if you're concerned in any way**, don't be afraid to **talk to your doctor** and get yourself tested and checked, even if you're not yet 50!

## What is my risk of prostate cancer?



**1 in 8**

In the UK, about one in eight men will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.



Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK



### Over the age of 50

Prostate cancer mainly affects men over the age of 50 and **your risk increases with age**. The average age for men to be diagnosed with prostate cancer is between 70 and 74 years.

### Family history and genetics

**2.5x**

You are **two and a half times more likely** to get prostate cancer if your father or brother has been diagnosed with it, compared with a man who has no affected relatives.



Your risk of prostate cancer might be increased if you have close relatives with breast cancer – if their breast cancer is linked to faults in the genes BRCA1 or BRCA2.

### Ethnicity



**Black men are more likely to get prostate cancer than other men.** In the UK, about **1 in 4 Black men** will get prostate cancer at some point in their lives.



Speak to our Specialist Nurses  
**0800 074 8383**  
[prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)

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Our story isn't over yet, and won't be for some time.

On 16th September the consultant told us they couldn't guarantee the surgery had removed all the cancerous cells, but that Mark's **latest PSA tests** were now reporting as **negligible** (undetectable).

Mark is now in a period of **monitoring**. In 3 months time his PSA will be checked again and if the levels have risen, we'll be planning the next course of treatment - **radiotherapy**.

Naturally we're encouraged by the **high rates of survival**, but it would have made much better reading to see figures of 100%.

As with all cancers, **research is vital** in the fight for survival, but **research costs**. Over the years prostate cancer has been badly underfunded. **You** can help change that.

To find out more and to **donate**, please visit <http://prostatecanceruk.org/> or you could consider sponsoring the **Tableau Mo Bros & Sistas Movember team** <http://moteam.co/tableau-mo-bros-sistas> who will be getting hairy in support of men's cancers.

Thank you

