

Title:

Team Approach Urged in Prostate Cancer Treatment

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

An estimated 230,000 American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2005 - enough to fill a baseball stadium four or five times. But research shows that a partner's involvement in health care decisions is positively associated with better outcomes for prostate cancer patients.

Ali Torre, wife of legendary baseball manager and prostate cancer survivor Joe Torre, knows firsthand the important role that family members play in helping a person with prostate cancer make treatment decisions.

"I learned through my husband's experience with prostate cancer that assembling a multidisciplinary team of medical specialists, including a urologist, a radiation oncologist and a medical oncologist, is the best way to ensure that all treatment options are fully explored."

Torre is partnering with the Prostate Cancer Foundation on a new program called Women Join the TEAM Approach: Prostate Cancer Treatment, Education, Awareness and Management. The campaign urges partners and caregivers of men with prostate cancer to become active in their loved ones' treatment decisions.

In particular, the program encourages men with prostate cancer to seek the advice of an integrated team of health care specialists to best determine a course of action for the disease. A TEAM Approach has become standard in treating other cancers, such as breast, colon and lung cancer, but this is currently not the case in prostate cancer.

The combined expertise of various prostate cancer specialists can help men

explore all available treatment options to decide upon the best course of treatment.

Research has also shown that partners may enhance the quality of decision-making by gathering information, helping the patient to ask questions, or helping advise them about treatment decisions.

Torre's goal is to help partners and caregivers learn from her experiences in supporting loved ones with prostate cancer. Through not only her husband's, but also her father's prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment, Torre became acutely aware of the vital role she played in their health care decisions.

"Prostate cancer treatment has lagged behind other cancers where multidisciplinary teams of physicians collectively guide treatment," said Dr. James McKiernan, Assistant Professor of Urology at Columbia University Medical Center and Attending Physician at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia and a spokesman for the Women Join the TEAM Approach program.

"We need to do a better job of educating men with prostate cancer not to wait until their disease has progressed to a late stage to seek the advice of a medical oncologist, and of changing our approach in the management of prostate cancer by combining the specialists early on to benefit the patient."