



Living through cancer with exercise

Sunflower Wellness empowers people living with cancer to find strength and support through exercise.

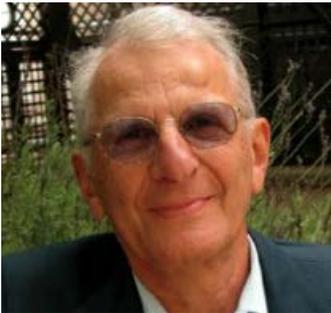
November 2014

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Prostate Cancer Support Groups:

UCSF patient advocate and support group leader Stan Rosenfeld speaks with Sunflower Wellness' Kris Morrison



Patients are seeking and discovering more ways to find help and support outside of their doctors' offices. Like cancer-focused Exercise Counseling and classes, cancer

support groups provide a vital path for making connections, sharing knowledge and building personal empowerment. As part of our special newsletter focus on prostate cancer, we spoke with Stan Rosenfeld to discuss prostate cancer support groups, what happens in the meetings and why they're so helpful for patients and caregivers. We also discussed the support group connection to exercise.

Stan Rosenfeld chairs the UCSF Urology Patient Services Committee and has been a long-time patient advocate for UCSF. He's led the Marin County Prostate Cancer Support Group since 1998 and is a volunteer for UCSF's Prostate Cancer Peer Support Group. Stan is a prostate cancer survivor, expert researcher, dedicated educator and patient advocate. He volunteers in leadership roles with several cancer-focused organizations.

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For the uninitiated, what happens at prostate cancer support group meetings? Good question. If a newly diagnosed man is attending his first meeting, we welcome him and inform him that we are not physicians and don't give medical advice. However, we explain that we have many experiences that we can share with him (and any person he brings along for support). The new person tells us his diagnosis details, and we tell him our experiences. We share the difficulty we all have had in handling the news and deciding what to do about it. Sharing information and personal experiences is usually helpful to newcomers.

What else do you discuss at the meetings? The men (and women) present give updates on where they are in their process. Some are deciding what to do, others report on their successes with their treatment and/or their decisions not to be treated. There is a lot of emphasis on good nutrition, a lot of interaction, and a lot of going back and forth. Even though we meet for an hour and a half every week, there never seems to be enough time.

What common issues and areas of interest come up? Things such as "How serious is my diagnosis?", "Am I going to survive?", "What has worked, or not, for other men?" are common questions for men who are new to the group. (→)

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Men who have been attending for a while often describe the side effects they experience and "compare notes" with others who have had similar treatments and/or side effects and are looking for ways to address their issues.

Do we know what percentage of prostate cancer patients seek out support groups? Men, in general, do not "seek out" support groups. The word has to get out that a support group exists for men diagnosed with prostate cancer, and that it is primarily for information and sharing of experiences. Also, word of mouth is key from those who have attended, emphasizing to the newly-diagnosed that the meetings will be helpful and non-intimidating.

What aspects of your support group work do you find most difficult and challenging? It is most challenging to try to be helpful without giving medical advice. I believe that we and other groups do this well, although it requires constant reminding. Also, we are concerned about men opting for invasive treatment who may not need such treatment. We recommend they talk to their physicians about Active Surveillance programs that monitor what is usually a very small amount of cancer, and not undergo any invasive treatment. It can also be difficult when a member comes in who is diagnosed with advanced cancer.

What do patients and survivors find beneficial from attending support groups? I would say primarily they find that they are not alone. Many men and families have gone through the same shock as they have, and, for the large part, have done very well and have now gone on with their lives.

In a medical setting, do doctors and nurses encourage cancer patients to seek out support groups? What I can say is that for many support

groups like ours, which are supportive, informational, and do not give medical advice, most men who come to our groups are referred by their physicians.

Shifting gears, what is your experience with exercise programs for men with prostate cancer? We are big on exercise, based on the many studies that show a risk reduction effect as well as an effect against the recurrence of the cancer. UCSF led several significant studies that support these conclusions. Otherwise, we would recommend people speak with their doctors or organizations, such as Sunflower Wellness, that have specific skills and experience working with cancer patients.

"We are big on exercise, based on the many studies that show a risk reduction effect as well as an effect against the recurrence of the cancer."

In support group meetings, does exercise ever come up as a topic for

copings, empowerment and recovery? Yes to all of the above, as well as emphasis on the studies that show that the more a man exercises, the less tired he is following radiation therapy or hormone therapy. In the group I lead, I would estimate that at least half of the men added to or started an exercise program. Exercise helps with reducing fatigue from radiation and hormone therapy, weight loss before surgery, and general well-being on all fronts.

What barriers to exercise do you find among the men in your support groups? For most men who are not taking chemo, and that is the vast majority of men, there is no barrier to exercise, and stopping short of giving medical advice, we encourage all forms of activity. Some men on chemo feel too tired to exercise but we encourage them to speak with their doctors for appropriate exercises. UCSF and Marin General Hospital, the two hospitals with which I am the most familiar, are very big on exercise, with free counseling and exercise classes.

For more information on Stan's support groups, see: <http://urology.ucsf.edu/patient-care/cancer/patient-advocates-page>.

UCSF Prostate Cancer Study examines the role of exercise

Kris Morrison and Trisha Hue



Regan Fedric, co-founder and Program Director at Sunflower Wellness, is one of a group of professionals leading a multidisciplinary pilot study at UCSF to minimize treatment side effects for prostate cancer patients. The pilot study, *A Multi-Disciplinary Clinic to Mitigate the Impact of Androgen Deprivation Therapy in Prostate Cancer*, is headed by UCSF physician and medical director Rahal Aggarwal.

More than one third of the estimated two million prostate cancer survivors in the United States receive androgen deprivation therapy (ADT). The goal of this treatment is to reduce the levels of testosterone and dihydrotestosterone in the body, causing cancer to shrink or grow more slowly. In many patients, ADT also improves the effectiveness of radiation. Though effective, this treatment leads to side effects, which may lead to disability, including accelerated loss of bone³⁻⁵ and muscle/strength.¹⁻⁷

The authors of the UCSF pilot study assert that many of the treatment side effects can be modified or minimized through intervention and lifestyle changes. Patients enrolled in the study receive one-on-one sessions with an exercise trainer, a nutritionist and a symptom management expert. The study, being sponsored and run by UCSF's STAND clinic, offers a unique multidisciplinary approach that looks to establish a new standard-of-care for prostate cancer patients. Participation in the multidisciplinary clinic has been high, with a 95% adherence rate to the clinic schedule.

Regan, one of seven co-authors, provides individualized exercise counseling with prostate cancer patients participating in the clinical study.

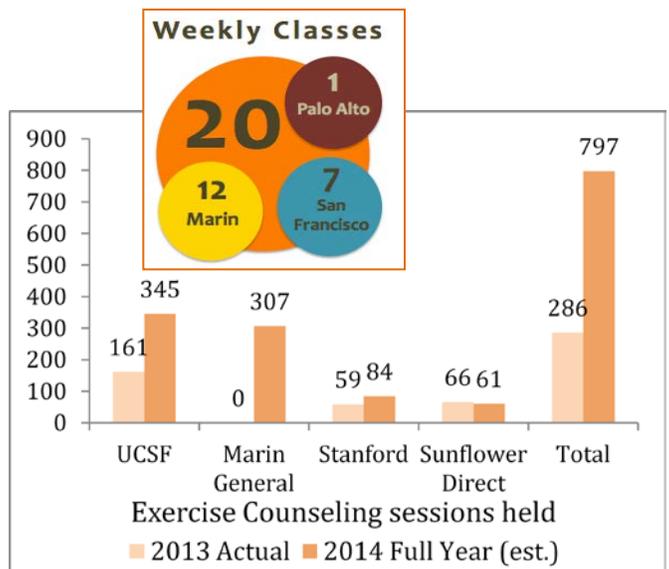
“So far, we're getting positive feedback from all parts of the study,” Regan says. “On the exercise front, most men are reporting muscle mass gains and that their weight is stabilizing.”

Encouraging new research evidence from other research studies has shown that physical activity has positive effects in men on ADT. A review of 10 clinical trials demonstrated that appropriately prescribed exercise resulted in improvements in muscular strength, cardio-respiratory fitness, and fatigue. Researchers found benefits for muscle strength with resistance training alone, as well as when combined with aerobic exercise.⁸

To find out more about the STAND Clinic study, or to refer a patient, call the UCSF nurse navigator at 415-885-7795 or visit www.ucsfhealth.org/stand

References: ¹Greenspan SL, et al. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 2005;90:6410-17.; ²Grossmann M, et al. *Med J Aust.* 2011;194:301-6; ³Smith MR. *Urology.* 2004;63:742-5.; ⁴Smith MR, et al. *J Clin Endocrinol Metab.* 2002;87:599-603.; ⁵Smith MR. *Curr Opin Endocrinol Diab Obes.* 2007;14:247-254.; ⁶Galvão DA, et al. *BJU Int.* 2008;102:44-7.; ⁷Smith MR, et al. *Cancer.* 2008;112:2188-94.; ⁸Gardner JR, et al. *J Clin Oncol.* 2014;32(4):335-46.

Sunflower Wellness, By the Numbers



- Exercise Counseling has nearly **tripled** this year!
- Total direct clients served: 540
- Class sessions logged: 2,622
- Personal training sessions: 687
- Total client- hours of exercise: Over 13,000

Exercise of the Month: Bird Dog



Sunflower Wellness presents “Bird Dog,” in partnership with WebExercises.com. For a short video demonstration of this exercise, watch here: <http://tinyurl.com/lmfjqor>

Purpose: Increase core strength and muscular endurance.

Benefits: Improves stability, functional strength and injury prevention.

Starting position: Begin on your hands and knees with your head and back in a straight position. Hands should be under your shoulders, hips directly above your knees.

Movement: Activate core muscles. Raise one arm to shoulder level as opposite leg simultaneously lifts off floor, extending to hip height. Pause momentarily. Return to start position and alternate sides. Maintain a straight spine position, not allowing your hips to twist or rotate. Do not hyper-extend low back when extending leg. Repeat for prescribed repetitions and sets.

Take it from me!

It has taken me a while to admit that I am my own worst patient. While I work with seniors and hospice clients daily, teaching them that “movement is life,” I’ve been completely neglecting my own need to exercise. With a Master’s Degree in Health Education I certainly know that exercise is important for everyone – including me.



So after four months of chemo and six surgeries for breast cancer, I was thrilled to join the Sunflower Wellness program. But the pain from aromatase inhibitors stopped me from going to the gym. I paid for the membership every three months with a new resolve to go. But I never did.

Finally, after nine months of grieving my father’s sudden passing from brain cancer, I forced myself to go to the gym three months ago. Wow! I just can’t express how much better I feel. Or how foolish and remorseful I am that I didn’t go sooner. If anyone is a testament to getting off your duff and getting moving – take it from me – a survivor and trained health educator who learned a little late. But not too late.

– Kimberly Green, Sunflower Wellness participant

Please help us continue our great work by making a donation today!

In Brief

- A big thank you to the **Val A. Browning Foundation** for providing us with a generous grant to help us start cancer-exercise programs for low-income communities in the Bay Area. We’ve got several programs ready to begin soon!
- We proudly salute the presenters and participants who attended our October 25 Cancer-Exercise Trainer-training Seminar at **UCSF Fitness & Recreation**. Our seminars allow us to respond to the many trainer inquiries we receive and meet the growth demands of our programs.
- Sunflower Wellness is pleased to have been chosen by the Social Sector Solutions program – a joint effort by the **Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley** and **McKinsey Consulting** – to participate in a 9-week strategy consulting effort. Sunflower has big things in its future!
- Our name and logo are on a building! Thank you to **Sanovas** in San Rafael for generously donating exercise and office space. Grand opening soon!

