# Men urged to rethink masculinity and prioritise prostate health



Men are being encouraged to set aside traditional notions of masculinity and seek medical advice regarding prostate health, following alarming revelations by Oliver Kemp, the chief executive of Prostate Cancer Research. Speaking to the Daily Mail, Kemp shared that he and his colleagues have attended “too many” funerals of patients who succumbed to prostate cancer after delaying seeking medical help.

Kemp highlighted a common sentiment among men, noting that many often hesitate to consult their doctors. "We certainly hear it all the time, people not wanting to go and bother their doctor," he explained. He added that many men express a reluctance to discover potential health issues, stating, "Somebody says: 'Actually, I'll find out if I'm ill at some point, why do I want to find out early?' The simple answer to that is, if you find out early, it's perfectly treatable."

The urgency of this message comes on the heels of statistics indicating that prostate cancer is the most diagnosed type of cancer in England, with 55,033 new cases reported in 2023. Kemp expressed grave concern over the current statistics, which show approximately 12,000 men die annually from prostate cancer primarily due to late diagnoses. "Bring all those men forward, as many men as we possibly can, we're going to save a hell of a lot of lives," he asserted.

Kemp advocates for a targeted national screening programme tailored for high-risk males, particularly those aged between 45 and 69. This demographic includes individuals of Black ethnicity, those with a family history of the disease, and men carrying specific genetic mutations. His analysis suggests that implementing such a programme could lead to an additional 775 early diagnoses each year among high-risk individuals and would potentially prevent almost 300 men from reaching a stage 4 diagnosis, at which point the cancer becomes incurable.

Furthermore, the economic implications of early diagnoses are significant, with a projected net benefit of £11,900 for each man diagnosed. Reflecting on his experiences, Kemp stated, "I've been in this job for seven years now, and I've been to people's funerals who found out late." One particularly poignant memory involved attending the funeral of a man in his 50s, who was a father of two small children, highlighting the tragic consequences of delayed diagnosis.

In addressing the broader cultural issues surrounding male health, Kemp remarked, "I think men in general are pretty rubbish with dealing with their health," attributing this to longstanding societal expectations that encourage men to appear strong and invulnerable. He welcomed the emergence of public figures—such as Olympic cycling champion Sir Chris Hoy and the late BBC Breakfast presenter Bill Turnbull—speaking out about their health challenges. Kemp noted, "The stigma has been reduced by very well-known and very well-liked people being affected by it," which could motivate other men to seek the professional help they need.

Kemp also pointed out advances in medical care, stating that improvements in treatment options have lessened the side effects typically associated with prostate cancer interventions, like impotence and incontinence. Additionally, he mentioned enhanced testing accuracy, which reduces the chances of receiving false positive results, leading to unnecessary anxiety and further interventions.

Research conducted by the Daily Mail revealed that an overwhelming 94 per cent of family doctors support the introduction of a national screening programme akin to those available for breast, bowel, and cervical cancers. "For 94 per cent of anybody to say yes to anything these days, it's absolutely incredible," Kemp remarked, underlining the urgency among medical professionals regarding the need for improved screenings.

The Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, acknowledged the necessity of focusing on prostate cancer outcomes and praised the Daily Mail's efforts to highlight this critical issue. Concurrently, the UK National Screening Committee is evaluating the evidence for prostate cancer screening options, with recommendations anticipated later in the year. This prospect already enjoys cross-party backing from various MPs, including former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

Kemp concluded with a hopeful assessment of the political landscape, remarking, "The political will is out there, and I think the electorate expects politicians of all political persuasions to be able to get behind this." Such developments signal a potential shift towards more proactive measures in tackling prostate cancer and improving early diagnosis rates amongst the male population.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/prostate-cancer/prostate-cancer-symptoms> - This URL corroborates information about prostate cancer symptoms and the importance of early detection, supporting Kemp's message on the need for men to seek medical advice.
* <https://www.moffitt.org/cancers/prostate-cancer/faqs/what-are-the-five-warning-signs-of-prostate-cancer/> - This site lists common symptoms of prostate cancer, highlighting the importance of early diagnosis to prevent severe outcomes.
* <https://www.prostatecanceruk.org/prostate-information-and-support/risk-and-symptoms/prostate-cancer-signs-and-symptoms/> - It provides insights into prostate cancer risk factors and symptoms, aligning with Kemp's advocacy for targeted screening programs.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/prostate-cancer/incidence> - Although not directly mentioned in the search results, Cancer Research UK typically provides statistics on cancer incidence, which would support Kemp's concern over prostate cancer cases in England.
* <https://www.cancer.gov/types/prostate/understanding-prostate-cancer> - While not found in the search results, this URL from the National Cancer Institute is known to provide comprehensive information on prostate cancer, including early detection and treatment options.