



# City of Cambridge

9.

IN CITY COUNCIL

February 2, 1998

COUNCILLOR REEVES  
 COUNCILLOR BORN  
 COUNCILLOR DAVIS  
 MAYOR DUEHAY  
 VICE MAYOR GALLUCCIO  
 COUNCILLOR RUSSELL  
 COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN  
 COUNCILLOR TOOMEY  
 COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: As recently reported by the Boston Globe in the attached article, prostate cancer strikes African-Americans disproportionately hard, they have the highest prostate cancer rate in the world; and

WHEREAS: Black men are diagnosed with prostate cancer far more frequently and at younger ages than white men, and prostate cancer is more often fatal in blacks than in whites; and

WHEREAS: The Globe reports that there is a tendency for black men not to get regular check-ups and not to get rectal exams; and

WHEREAS: Health experts now recommend that black man have annual PSA and rectal exams beginning at age 40 - a decade earlier than white men; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council hereby refers this article to Chief Public Health Officer Harold Cox and the Men of Color Task Force to review the City's prostate cancer testing and outreach procedures in light of this issue.

In City Council February 2, 1998.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury  
City Clerk



# City of Cambridge

9.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 26, 1998

## COUNCILLOR REEVES

WHEREAS: As recently reported by the Boston Globe in the attached article, prostate cancer strikes African-Americans disproportionately hard, they have the highest prostate cancer rate in the world; and

WHEREAS: Black men are diagnosed with prostate cancer far more frequently and at younger ages than white men, and prostate cancer is more often fatal in blacks than in whites; and

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RESOLVED: That this City Council hereby refers this article to Chief Public Health Officer Harold Cox and the Men of Color Task Force to review the City's prostate cancer testing and outreach procedures in light of this issue.

REFERRED TO CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF 2/2/98 ON  
MOTION OF COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN.



K.R.

9.

~~Alphabet~~  
~~Article~~

~~October 17, 1998~~

Whereas: As recently reported by the Boston Globe in the attached ~~part of its series on~~ prostate cancer, strokes African-Americans disproportionately hard: ~~As a~~ they have the highest prostate cancer rate in the world; and

Whereas: Black men are diagnosed with prostate cancer far more frequently ~~than~~ and at younger ages than white men, and prostate cancer is more often fatal in blacks than in whites; and

Whereas: The Globe reports that there is a ~~cultural~~ tendency <sup>of</sup> for black men not to get regular checkups and not to ~~want~~ <sup>get</sup> rectal exams; and

Whereas: Health experts now ~~agree~~ <sup>recommend</sup> that black men have annual PSA and rectal exams beginning at age 40 - a decade earlier than white men; now therefore be it

Resolved: That <sup>City Council hereby refers</sup> this article ~~to~~ Chief Public Health Officer Harold Cox and the Men of Color Task Force to review the City's ~~outreach~~ ~~and~~ prostate cancer testing and outreach procedures in light of this issue

# The disease takes higher, more deadly toll on blacks

**"I felt terrible," says 80-year-old Louis Brothers of the day he was diagnosed with prostate cancer seven years ago.**

"I thought, 'How do I suddenly have prostate cancer?' because in my growing up you didn't mention cancer. It was something not to talk about."

Like many men, Brothers knew little about the disease, which strikes African-Americans disproportionately hard. In fact, American blacks have the highest prostate cancer rate in the world, but until recently they tended not to talk about it or seek routine exams.

"In the black community, the idea of having a rectal exam or even talking about prostate cancer is very sensitive," says Dr. Alvin Poussaint, a Harvard psychiatrist who is black. "Black men feel it's a blow to their masculinity and probably their sense of manhood. I know that black men have been very concerned about the effects of treatment. They say, 'I'm not going to have anything-

BLACKS, Page C3

## BLACKS

Continued from Page C1

that makes me impotent or incontinent."

Now Brothers and other black prostate cancer survivors, including singer Harry Belafonte and actor Sidney Poitier, are speaking out to raise the awareness they didn't have. Brothers is a member of the state Department of Public Health speakers bureau and often talks to black groups.

"I had the surgery in 1991, and I am getting along very fine," says Brothers, who is retired from a working life that included the US Air Force and time spent as an official of the American Association of Retired Persons. "I'm one of the lucky ones."

The statistics are striking, but the reasons for the imbalance aren't well understood.

Blacks are diagnosed with prostate cancer far more frequently and at younger ages than whites. In 1994, for example (the most recent data available), there were 135 cases per 100,000 white males, but 234 cases per 100,000 black males.

And prostate cancer is more often fatal in blacks than in whites. From 1986 to 1993, an average of 90 percent of white prostate cancer patients lived five years or more: for blacks, only 75 percent reached that milestone.

Japanese and other Asian men are at the lowest risk for prostate cancer, though when

## Black men at higher risk

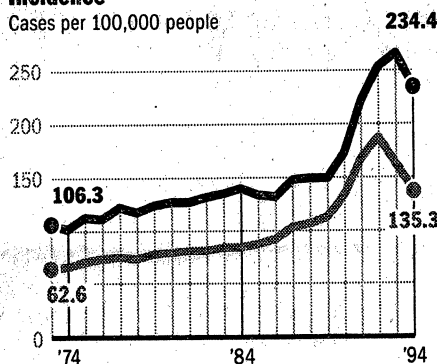
Incidence and death rates from prostate cancer are higher among black men than whites. The reasons aren't all known, but they include

differences in diet, access to medical care, and cultural attitudes toward rectal exams and surgery, as well as in the biology of the disease itself.

KEY ● Black men ● White men

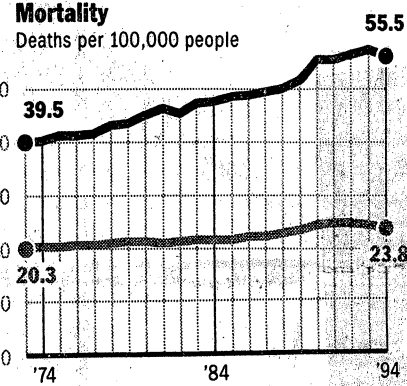
### Incidence

Cases per 100,000 people



### Mortality

Deaths per 100,000 people



SOURCE: National Cancer Institute, SEER Cancer Statistics Review 1973-1994

GLOBE STAFF CHART / SEAN McNAUGHTON

they move to the United States their rates rise. This suggests that diet or some environmental factor may play a role in the variations in rates.

When diagnosed, prostate cancer tends to be more advanced in black men. Brothers thinks that's because black men aren't in the habit of getting regular checkups and some have a cultural inhibition about rectal exams, but there's evidence that biological differences may be involved as well.

Microscopic cancers can be found in the prostates of men who die of other causes from age 30 on, and the lesions found in black men at every age tend to be larger, more numerous and more widespread, says Dr. Otis Brawley, a researcher in the Office of Special Populations at the National Cancer Institute.

Brawley, who is black, says that 5-alpha-reductase, an enzyme that converts the male hormone testosterone to a more powerful

# Disease takes higher toll in blacks

C3

form, is more active in blacks, but whether that leads to a higher rate of cancer isn't clear.

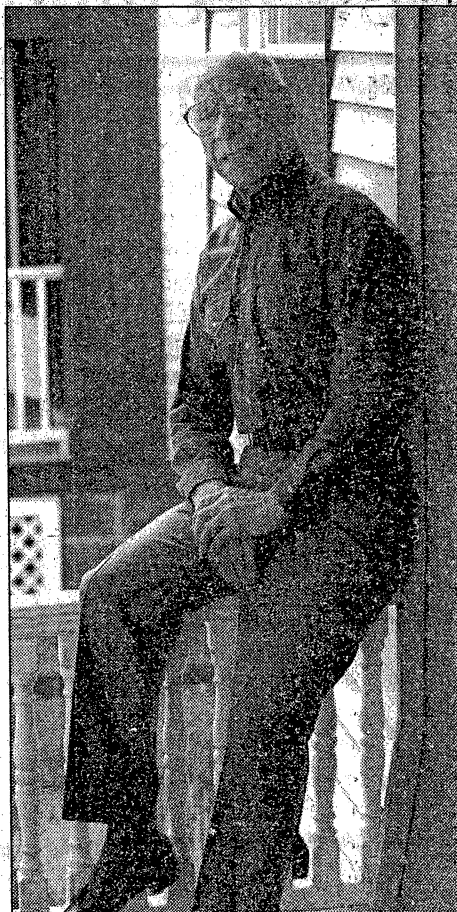
Diet is also under suspicion. There's growing evidence that diets high in animal fat increase the risk of prostate cancer, and some data indicate that many blacks eat more high-fat foods.

Most recently, Dr. Philip Kantoff at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has discovered a genetic marker that may hint at another biological difference in cancer risk. He reported in 1996 that a certain stretch of DNA in prostate cells is repeated a greater number of times in some men than others, and that men with fewer repeats were more likely to develop aggressive prostate cancer.

The marker, known as the CAG repeat, is part of a gene that instructs prostate cells to make a protein, the androgen receptor, that stimulates prostate cells to grow and divide when male hormones attach to it. Black men have been found to have fewer CAG repeats, Kantoff has found.

Whatever the cause of their vulnerability, black men are being urged to have annual PSA and rectal exams beginning at age 40 — a decade earlier than whites.

Psychiatrist Poussaint, who wrote a wake-up article about prostate cancer in *Ebony* magazine last year, says denial in the black community is beginning to change. And in middle class blacks, he says, fear is even driving some men to extremes.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / TOM LANDERS

## Louis Brothers says cancer wasn't talked about when he was growing up.

"Some of them are getting tested far more often than recommended," he says. "They don't want to wait a year," adds Poussaint. "I know of one man who goes in every three months for a PSA test."

RICHARD SALTUS

# The disease takes higher, more deadly toll on blacks

**"I felt terrible," says 80-year-old Louis Brothers of the day he was diagnosed with prostate cancer seven years ago.**

"I thought, 'How do I suddenly have prostate cancer?' because in my growing up you didn't mention cancer. It was something not to talk about."

Like many men, Brothers knew little about the disease, which strikes African-Americans disproportionately hard. In fact, American blacks have the highest prostate cancer rate in the world, but until recently they tended not to talk about it or seek routine exams.

"In the black community, the idea of having a rectal exam or even talking about prostate cancer is very sensitive," says Dr. Alvin Poussaint, a Harvard psychiatrist who is black. "Black men feel it's a blow to their masculinity and probably their sense of manhood. I know that black men have been very concerned about the effects of treatment. They say, 'I'm not going to have anything-

BLACKS, Page C3

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Continued from Page C1

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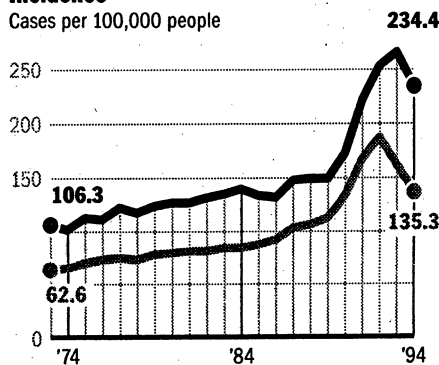
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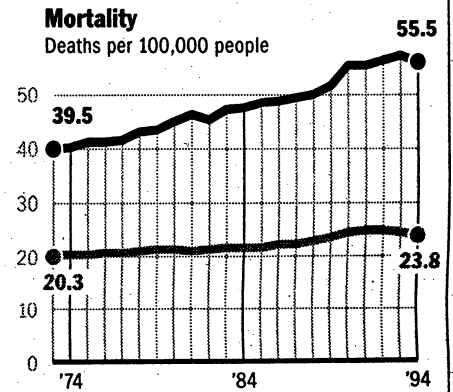
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The marker, known as the CAG repeat, is part of a gene that instructs prostate cells to make a protein, the androgen receptor, that stimulates prostate cells to grow and divide when male hormones attach to it. Black men have been found to have fewer CAG repeats, Kantoff has found.

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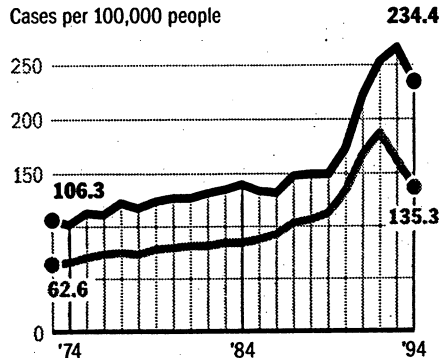
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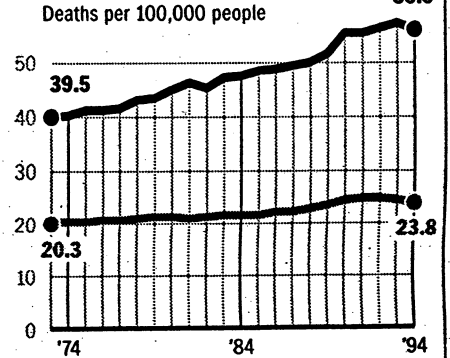
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January 26, 1998

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Consent Order #9

S-36

Councillor Reeves re: Review the City's  
prostrate cancer testing and outreach  
procedures in light of the high prostrate  
cancer rate for African-American Men.

In City Council January 26, 1998

All items carried forward to be a part  
of City Council Meeting of 2/2/98 on  
motion of Councillor Sullivan

In City Council February 2, 1998

**ORDER ADOPTED**