



## One-stop shopping for prostate patients

Seven years ago, Dr. John Collins realized that his prostate cancer patients needed more than just his counsel to deal with the disease, so he helped start a support group. "We're our own worst enemies," says the chief urologist at the Ottawa Hospital's Civic campus. "As men we have this [tendency to be] stoical and we keep it stowed up inside." Today, the Prostate Cancer Association of Ottawa-Carleton has more than 300 members.

But Collins also realized there were other gaps in service for men with prostate disease, including a lack of expedient diagnosis and support in making decisions about treatment, and a shortage of support after treatment. So Collins went to work again. His next project? A centre where men with prostate cancer can get all the support and services they need under one roof.

With the backing of the Ottawa Hospital's Medical Advisory Committee and financing pledged by the private sector, the Ottawa Hospital Prostate Centre will open its

doors later this year. It will be similar in concept to the Women's Breast Health Centre that already exists at the Civic campus in that it will offer diagnosis, treatment planning, research, support and information. Supporters say the need exists because prostate cancer is second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer mortality among men.

"There's a lot of erroneous information out there and on the Net," adds Collins. "The guys need help in getting the right information because [this will have] a lot of ramifications and implications for the treatment of prostate cancer. Helping people in this decision-making stage is one of the areas the centre will deal with."

The multidisciplinary centre will have only a small permanent staff but will be able to draw on the services of local oncologists, radiologists, ultrasound technicians, counsellors and nurse practitioners. "This centre will amalgamate the concerns of and focus things for people with prostate cancer," says Gordon Seabrook, chair of the prostate cancer association. "It will raise awareness not only on the part of potential patients but also in the medical community."

The new centre is still in its planning stages. It may be located at the hospital's Riverside campus, and is expected to cost about \$2 million. MDS Nordion, a local high-tech company, will be the main financial backer.

Wally Seeley, chair of the Canadian Prostate Cancer Network, says there is a growing trend toward establishing freestanding clinics to treat prostate disease. Similar centres already exist at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto and at the Vancouver Hospital, and there are plans for another one in Calgary. "The more the better," says Seeley. "Because of the almost epidemic proportions of the disease, things are happening despite of the lack of attention from the government." — © Janis Hass



Janis Hass photo

Dr. John Collins at work in Ottawa

## England's million-dollar needlestick injury

A British doctor has been awarded £465 000 (almost \$1.2 million) as compensation for a needlestick injury that had no medical repercussions. The junior house officer, who was newly qualified and still in her preregistration year, pricked herself on a needle that had been left on a

trolley in London's Charing Cross Hospital.

Although she did not develop an infection, she went on sick leave 2 years later and has not worked since. She says she had to struggle with growing anxieties about HIV infection, sharp instruments and

blood before going on sick leave in October 1994. The amount of the payout was reached in an out-of-court settlement last September.

The physician told the British Medical Association's *News Review*

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