

## Forecast for 'Cure' Uncertain After Radical Prostatectomy

**PHILADELPHIA**-After a radical prostatectomy, patients whose PSAs stay low can relax about recurrence in three years. Or is it six?

A team at the University of Toronto and Louisiana State in Shreveport has found that persistently low PSAs within three years of radical prostatectomy translate into cures. The group, which followed 200 patients for five years with postop PSAs of less than 0.1 ng/ml, says that 118 (60%) maintained PSAs at generally less than 0.01 ng/ml.

Thirty patients had slowly rising PSAs with doubling times greater than 300 days, but 52 patients had biochemical relapse with PSAs rising continuously, Dr. Eleftherios Diamandis' team told the American Association for Cancer Research meeting here.

All but one of the relapsed patients had rising PSA levels within two years of surgery. The single patient with later relapse had an undetectable level for 3½ years. Dr. Diamandis says that at least 60% of patients can be cured.

But a Hopkins team is less sanguine, and it would double the postop nail-biting period. In a study of 1,916 consecutive men followed over 14 years after

radical prostatectomy, there was recurrence even after extended biochemical disease-free follow-up, Dr. Charles Pound told the American Urological Association meeting in Dallas.

Fifty-six patients (2.9%) developed local recurrence at an average of 6.1 years (one to 12 years) after surgery, with a mean PSA at recurrence of 5.8 ng/ml. Yet 13 of the men in this group had an undetectable serum PSA at five years, and progressed to biochemical recurrence and local disease after that.

No patient had a recurrence with an undetectable PSA, says Dr. Pound, suggesting that as long as the PSA is undetectable, digital or imaging exams are unnecessary. -*Judith Groch*