

DR XUE QIN YU

– mapping the resources we need to conquer prostate cancer

Cancer Council New South Wales



Prostate cancer is a problem – a big problem – in Australia. It's the leading cancer among men, and as our population ages, more and more men are likely to get it.

This not only poses a dilemma for the male population as a whole, it means health authorities will come under more pressure to deal with all the cases. Making matters worse, different stages of the disease require very different kinds of treatment. So accurate estimates of the number of men in the community at specific stages of their cancer journey now and in future are needed to plan for and provide adequate care.

This is the area of special concern for Dr Xue Qin (pronounced Shee Chin) Yu, a Research Fellow at Cancer Council NSW. With his Cure Cancer Australia Foundation grant of \$90,000, Qin is developing statistical methods to estimate how many men are living with prostate cancer – at each stage of clinical care.

"This information is vitally important if we're going to provide adequate services for all men diagnosed with prostate cancer," he says.

The stages Qin will be analysing are initial diagnosis and treatment, recurrence, those who've survived for over 10 years and require minimal follow-up, patients needing palliative care and the rest who require ongoing monitoring.

FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY

Why did Qin choose statistical analysis as a target for study? The fact that prostate cancer is so prevalent and that treatment is fraught with uncertainty were big motivating factors for him. If you're diagnosed with it, will you get a secondary cancer or not? Practitioners don't always have concrete evidence about the best treatments, and must consider length of survival for patients as well as quality of life, he says.

"I hope my work leads to better planning for prostate cancer, better treatments and better outcomes for men with the disease," says Qin.

Though at age 54 he is older than other Cure Cancer grant recipients, the uniqueness of his work and its potential to ultimately help large numbers of cancer sufferers led to his selection.

"Qin completed his PhD at a later stage than many of the other researchers we support," explains Leanne Warner, Chief Executive Officer of Cure Cancer Australia. "However his work in prostate cancer has outstanding potential, and that's why we're funding him."

After completing his PhD at the University of Sydney, Qin spent 12 months in the US working on the Global Burden of Cancer project, an international study. He already has a great deal of research experience on his CV, having spent much time analysing cancer registry data and developing statistical methods for dealing with it.

In the past five years, he has co-authored 12 scientific papers in peer-reviewed journals and provided statistical advice to many researchers around Australia on relative survival analysis and relative survival modelling. In addition, his role includes mentoring other researchers. For example he recently supervised a World Health Organization-funded visiting fellow from Macau.

Qin has been a reviewer for high impact journals including the *British Journal of Cancer*, *International Journal of Cancer*, *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, *Cancer*, and *Journal of Royal Statistical Society*.

The Cure Cancer grant has been invaluable, he says. "We'd have had a substantial budget cut if we didn't have this wonderful contribution."

He and his wife live in Epping, Sydney, and have "two lovely children" – a son in high school and daughter at University.

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