



## Overview of Current Prostate Cancer Diagnosis Methods: Blind Biopsy

**If a screening reveals an elevated PSA level, a patient may choose to have a blind biopsy performed to determine if prostate cancer is present.**

### Blind Biopsy:

- ▶ The prostate is the only organ in the human body where biopsy is done blindly. Imaging tools such as ultrasound is used to make sure biopsy is obtained from the entire prostate instead of a specific detected abnormality.
- ▶ During a biopsy, the doctor first images your prostate, then inserts hollow biopsy needles into areas of the gland that may feel or look suspicious. A blind biopsy involves sampling at least 6 areas of the prostate with a needle to obtain a varied sample.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ If a tissue sample is taken because of an elevated PSA test, random tissue samples are often taken from six or more sectors of the prostate.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Bits of tissue are removed from each area through the needles; each snip causes a sharp sting.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ As many as 24 needle sticks may be used to obtain tissue samples from some patients.<sup>4</sup>

### Problems with Blind Biopsies

- ▶ Given that the cancer can be quite small and easy to miss when it is in the early stages, the biopsy can miss some cancers even when multiple samples are taken.<sup>5</sup> This is known as a "false negative" result.
- ▶ A blind biopsy can be a painful procedure and may cause various side effects, such as bleeding and infection.
- ▶ For a few days after the procedure, the patient may feel some soreness in the area, and may notice blood in his urine or light bleeding from his rectum. Many men also see some blood in their semen for a month or two after the biopsy.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Cancer Institute (<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/understanding-prostate-cancer-treatment/page3#2>)

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> American Cancer Society ([http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI\\_2\\_4\\_3X\\_How\\_is\\_prostate\\_cancer\\_diagnosed\\_36.asp?sitearea=](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_3X_How_is_prostate_cancer_diagnosed_36.asp?sitearea=))

<sup>5</sup> National Cancer Institute (<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/understanding-prostate-cancer-treatment/page3#2>)

<sup>6</sup> American Cancer Society ([http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI\\_2\\_4\\_3X\\_How\\_is\\_prostate\\_cancer\\_diaanosed\\_36.asp?sitearea=](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_3X_How_is_prostate_cancer_diaanosed_36.asp?sitearea=))