

## Dr. Stephen J. Freedland: treating prostate cancer—a healthy lifestyle is what matters!

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### Editor's note

The 2017 Annual Meeting of China Anti-Cancer Association-Genitourinary Cancer Committee and the 7th Shanghai Genitourinary Oncology International Symposium was held from 9 to 10 December. Many international experts from all around the world were invited to unfold the present developmental status on genitourinary cancers, the new treatment and advances, as well as future prospects on finding a cure. In the meantime, we were honored to conduct an interview with Dr. Stephen J. Freedland (*Figure 1*), a renowned Director of the Center for Integrated Research in Cancer and Lifestyle. In the interview, Dr. Freedland shared his insights into the fundamental importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle in treating prostate cancer, the biggest developments of treatment and advices to young residents.

### Expert's introduction

Dr. Freedland (*Figure 2*) is a faculty physician in the Division of Urology at the Cedars-Sinai Department of Surgery, a director of the Center for Integrated Research in Cancer and Lifestyle, a co-director of the Cancer Genetics and Prevention Program and an associate director for Faculty Development at the Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute. His clinical expertise focuses on urological diseases, particularly benign prostatic hyperplasia and prostate cancer. His approach toward cancer prevention and awareness focuses on treating the whole patient, not just the diseases, by combining traditional Western medicine with complementary holistic interventions.

His research interests include urological diseases and the role of diet, lifestyle and obesity in prostate cancer development and progression, as well as prostate cancer among racial groups and risk stratification for men with prostate cancer. Dr. Freedland has published over 500 studies, and he is an active reviewer for more than 50 journals.



**Figure 1** Dr. Stephen J. Freedland and AME Editor Miss Silvia L. Zhou.



**Figure 2** Dr. Stephen J. Freedland.

### Summary

Dr. Freedland considered maintaining a person's healthy lifestyle as one of the most fundamental element in treating prostate cancer. When asked how does a person's lifestyle affect the disease, he pointed out two major reasons that may lead to prostate cancer: one part of the reasons is



**Figure 3** Dr. Stephen J. Freedland: treating prostate cancer—a healthy lifestyle is what matters (1)!

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/23346>

about genetics, and another part of it is about lifestyle. To maintain a healthy lifestyle is a broad concept, Dr. Freedland tends to help patients to lose weights, as for him, it is a fundamental way of treating cancers, regardless of prostate cancer, or any other related urological diseases.

Nevertheless, Dr. Freedland emphasized on getting the patients to know that they are changing their ways of life, rather than only to advise them getting on “a diet”. This is because he deeply believes that cancer prevention and awareness should always focus on treating the whole patient, and not just the disease. In the United States, he suggested to help patients to lose weights by telling them to avoid as many sugars as they can when eating. Meanwhile, he also suggested patients to do a lot of exercises, and minimize the number of calories they consume. After all, “It’s the lifestyle that matters, not a diet,” he assured.

Dr. Freedland is excited at the breakthroughs of treating prostate cancer. In terms of resources, he reviewed that there are more molecular markers available now, they help to tell whomever the doctor should biopsy in the first place. On the other hand, there is also better imaging to find the cancers, as well as having genomic test to tell how bad the cancers are.

For example, if we are looking for recurrent diseases, we now have a better imaging, such as tumor target prostate specific membrane antigen (PSMA), PET scan and others. Moreover, with all of the new drugs, patients with metastatic castrate-resistant disease are estimated to have a survival extension for two to five months with each drug. If the patients are using the drugs early, it further prolongs their survival periods up to a year and a half for men with metastatic hormone-sensitive disease.

Looking back, Dr. Freedland was determined to become a cancer specialist since he was a young boy. He recalled the times when many people considered cancer as something “scary”, “unknown”, and they feared it. That’s the moment when he made up his mind. “I can make a difference.” Later, he became a surgeon, as someone who is young and wanted to cure cancer. Dr. Freedland decided on choosing the field of prostate for a number of reasons, including the fact that he likes the urologists, doing prostate cancer research and presenting a lot of unanswered questions which is favorable for research opportunities and so forth.

He urged young residents to work hard if they want to become a successful surgeon. “*There’s no short cut, no matter how smart you are,*” he claimed. He believed that the key to success for young residents was to do a lot of work after hours on weekends, and always be prepared and be a pleasure to work with. “For residents, work hard, being a good mentee, listen and you will do well.”

For more details, please check out the interview video below (*Figure 3*).

### Interview questions

- (I) Why do you consider a person’s lifestyle as a major risk of prostate cancer? How is a person’s lifestyle affecting the disease?
- (II) What are the most common urological diseases that obese people may easily suffered from?
- (III) What is the biggest breakthrough in treating prostate cancer?
- (IV) What do you think is your greatest accomplishment so far in your field?
- (V) Do you always know you want to become a urologist, or is that something that happened along the way?
- (VI) What advices would you like to give to young residents who want to be a successful surgeon?

### Acknowledgements

On behalf of the editorial office of *Translational Andrology and Urology (TAU)*, we would like to extend our gratitude to Dr. Freedland for sharing his opinions with us.

### Footnote

*Conflicts of Interest:* The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**References**

1. Wong V, Liu AY, Zhou SL. Dr. Stephen J. Freedland: treating prostate cancer—a healthy lifestyle is what matters! *Asvide* 2018;5:070. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/23346>

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