

Men over 50 risk prostate enlargement

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Prostate is a male reproductive organ. Its shape resembles a chestnut and it is close to the bladder. It forms a ring round urethra. Besides prostate cancer, another ailment associated with the organ is benign prostatic enlargement, otherwise known as Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia.

Benign prostatic hyperplasia is a non-cancerous prostate problem in which elements of the prostate gland grow. Because of the enlargement, it may compress the urethra, thereby impeding the flow of urine from the bladder through the urethra. This leads to urine retention and the need for frequent urination. If BPH is serious, complete blockage can occur.

An expert and Medical Director of Benjamin and Michael Limited, Mr. Adeyemi Amuwo, in an interview with our correspondent in Lagos, explained symptoms of BPH prostatic hyperplasia, which he said usually started at the age of 40 years. He added that the disease might not show any symptom at its early stage.

He said it affected 50 per cent of men aged between 50 and 59 years; 60 per cent of men in their 60s and 80 per cent of men aged 70 years and above.

According to him, its symptoms include diminished urinary stream, delay in urinating; urinating several times at night; involuntary voiding of urine and feeling of incompletely evacuated bladder.

Amuwo explained how BPH could develop in men. According to him, prostate regulates male sex hormones produced in the brain and testes. "Prostate fluid is essential for the morbidity of the sperm," he added.

Amuwo stated that as from the age of 40 years, nodules or tissues start to grow in the prostate gland. For several years, it may not be noticed. "As time passes, the growing nodules press the urethra and obstruct the flow of the urine," he said.

The expert said, "BPH is considered to be an age-related change rather than an actual illness. However, the increased prostate may constantly obstruct the passage of urine."

He explained that because of obstruction caused by enlarged prostate, some urine could be retained. The managing director said, "This residual urine can eventually affect the kidneys through urinary retention and inflammation. In a worst case scenario, untreated BPH could, in its later stage, lead to chronic kidney failure."

Neither medication nor surgery can completely cure BPH. However, studies have shown that the enlargement of prostate can be delayed.

Amuwo recommended the use of medication that could reduce night and daytime frequency of urination. According to him, such dietary supplements could also reduce residual urine and increase its flow.

Amuwo said such supplements could also "help inhibit prostate growth because it functions as a blocker of the key enzymes that can affect the prostate."

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