

Prostate condition 'very common'

Peter Mandelson is thought to have suffered from an enlarged prostate gland, a condition which experts said was very common in men.

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An estimated 60 per cent of men aged over 60 years of age are thought to have an enlarged prostate, a small gland in the pelvis that is found only in men.

The condition can put pressure on the bladder and cause problems including a need to get up frequently in the night to urinate.

Specialists said that the reasons why the gland starts to grow are still not fully understood and that treatment was necessary only if the problems started to affect a man's day to day life.

Prof Stephen Langley, a consultant urologist at Royal Surrey County Hospital in Guildford, said that the prostate stops growing at the age of 18 but starts growing again at the age of 40 in a process called the "reawakening".

Experts believe that fluctuations in hormone levels could be responsible for this second phase of growth. Typical problems caused by an enlarged prostate include an urge to urinate frequently and a feeling of a full bladder.

Mark Emberton, consultant urologist at University College London Hospital, said: "BPH does not kill you. "It's a quality of life decision."

Sufferers of the condition, known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), are encouraged to cut down on alcoholic and caffeinated drinks to help ease symptoms, as well as offered drugs.

If these prove unsuccessful surgical procedures, which can involve removing part of the enlarged prostate gland, can be offered.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/6068026/Prostate-condition-very-common.html>