

The Prostate: Everything You Need to Know

Yosh Taguchi

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“For its weight and size, the prostate is the source of more health problems than any other part of the male anatomy.” That statement alone is reason enough for this book. However, the statistics also speak loudly: “Between 55 and 60 percent of all men in North America develop prostate enlargement,” and “14 percent of all males born each year in the early part of the twenty-first century will develop prostate cancer.” Because prostate problems are so prevalent, and because even discussing it is still somewhat taboo, Dr. Taguchi put together a small but thorough look at the prostate gland and its three most common diseases: prostate enlargement, prostatitis, and prostate cancer.

In clear language, Taguchi discusses the evolution of the prostate, what it does, why it does it, and what can go wrong with it. He describes symptoms and treatments in visual ways, though some description may be tough for the squeamish, such as this image of surgery: “...I make a transverse cut over the prostate capsule, and, with my index finger, simply gouge out—or enucleate—the enlarged tissue... It’s a bit like removing the fruit of a tangerine after the peel has been cut, and it is often just as easy.”

This book is filled with anecdotes, both personal and historical. For example, the author notes that eunuchs from the Middle Ages—castrated before puberty—did not suffer from enlarged prostates. He tells of his patients, their successes and failures, and some very thought-provoking insights into the pharmaceutical industry’s difficulty marketing drugs for prostate treatment. (20 to 25 percent of urologists’ incomes derive from a surgical treatment known as transurethral resection of the prostate. Yet only 3 percent of men with enlarged prostate resort to surgery. Although an effective drug treatment may be desirable to patients, there might be resistance to it by physicians.)

If there’s any flaw to this book, it comes from Dr. Taguchi’s status as a surgeon. He gives somewhat short shrift to nonsurgical techniques. Although he’s thorough in covering the options, plusses, and minuses of varying treatments, he has a definite bias toward surgery. Little or no time is spent on the patient’s mental and emotional responses to various diseases of the prostate. Still, this book is informative and useful for anybody concerned about prostate health.

MARK TERRY (July / August 2001)

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