

InspireProstate CancerScreening And Early Detection

PSA Testing----What Do We Know About Test-Retest Reliability and Lab Error? - Prostate cancer

Les1: Les12

June 11, 2017 at 8:02 pm - 49 Replies

Gentlemen-

Just wondering if anyone is familiar with studies indicating how often---and to what degree---PSA readings vary because the test is not totally reliable, or because human error occurs in the reading of results. It seems to me that we all too often receive unusual results that eventually return to baseline upon retesting. And most of the time we are led to believe that we experienced a transient, non-cancerous condition that resolved itself. Could it have simply been lab error? (Not something our urologists love to admit.)

For example, I have taken about 25 PSA tests over the past six years and on 2 occasions my PSA spiked upwards. Rather than spending a couple of months worrying about these results before receiving a retest, I strongly requested another PSA test within two weeks. In both cases, my PSA came back down again dramatically (e.g. from approximately 10 to my normal 5) and stayed that way on subsequent readings.

So what happened? Given that I always prepare for my PSA test (no bike riding, sexual activity for 42 hours, etc.), I am at a loss to figure out what happened. Also, in both cases I had urine tests that showed no infections.

It seems to me that it would be rather easy to examine the reliability of PSA tests (e.g. blood samples of 100 men could be sent to multiple labs) and I just wonder if it has been done.

I am not suggesting that PSA tests are generally inaccurate. But how perfect are they? Any man who has worried about a high reading deserves to know how likely it may have simply been caused by lab error.

Thoughts?

Best wishes to all,
Les

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