

Prostate screening does more harm than good in US

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DOCTORS should stop screening for prostate cancer because it does more harm than good. This advice comes more than a decade after the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test was introduced in the US.

"PSA-based screening for prostate cancer has no net benefit," [concludes](#) the [US Preventive Services Task Force](#), which evaluates [screening services](#). The dangers of PSA-based screening include a high rate of false positives, negative psychological effects, and complications associated with diagnostic biopsy and treatment, the task force says.

Between 1986 and 2005, 1 million men in the US had surgery and radiotherapy for prostate cancer after a PSA test, but the panel found no evidence this prevented more deaths than "watching and waiting". However, between 200 and 300 men in every thousand treated developed incontinence or erectile dysfunction.

"It's encouraging to see a real debate on the impact of the PSA test on patient outcome," says [John Semmes](#) of Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk.