

Prostate Cancer Risk

Men's fear of being labelled homosexuals fuelling prostate cancer risk.

CHAIRMAN of the Jamaica Cancer Society, Earl Jarrett, has raised concerns that the fear of being labelled homosexuals is causing some Jamaican men to shy away from doing prostate examinations, resulting in the country maintaining the record of having one of the highest prostate cancer rates in the world. Jarrett who was addressing the Rotary Club of New Kingston at the Pegasus Hotel recently, implored more men to encourage each other to do the prostate examination, which could eventually save their lives. "In 2009, there is no reason why Jamaican men should still be of the view that to have a digital rectal examination is an indication of some homosexuality. There is no reason why we should allow the homophobia to get to the stage where it impacts on our health," he said.

Jarrett said the mortality rate for cancer is still on the increase despite the Jamaica Cancer Society's efforts to provide education and free screening for many Jamaicans. He noted that the compliance rate for Jamaican men is extremely low. "In Jamaica there is a extremely low rate of compliance for Jamaican men to be screened for prostate cancer. Jamaican men are still hung up on the simple test that needs to be done to fight prostate cancer," he said. In addition to prostate cancer, Jarrett said cervical and breast cancer continue to claim many lives, however, this he said can be controlled once persons start coming out for their screening and once they start educating themselves about the disease. "There is a sense of fatalism in Jamaica, that you cannot do much about what you are destined to become, and our mission is to change that by providing adequate and appropriate education through a programme of cancer control, so that people will understand that no woman in Jamaica should ever die from cervical cancer, that many, many, many Jamaican men need not die from prostate cancer and that no one at all should ever die from lung cancer," he said.