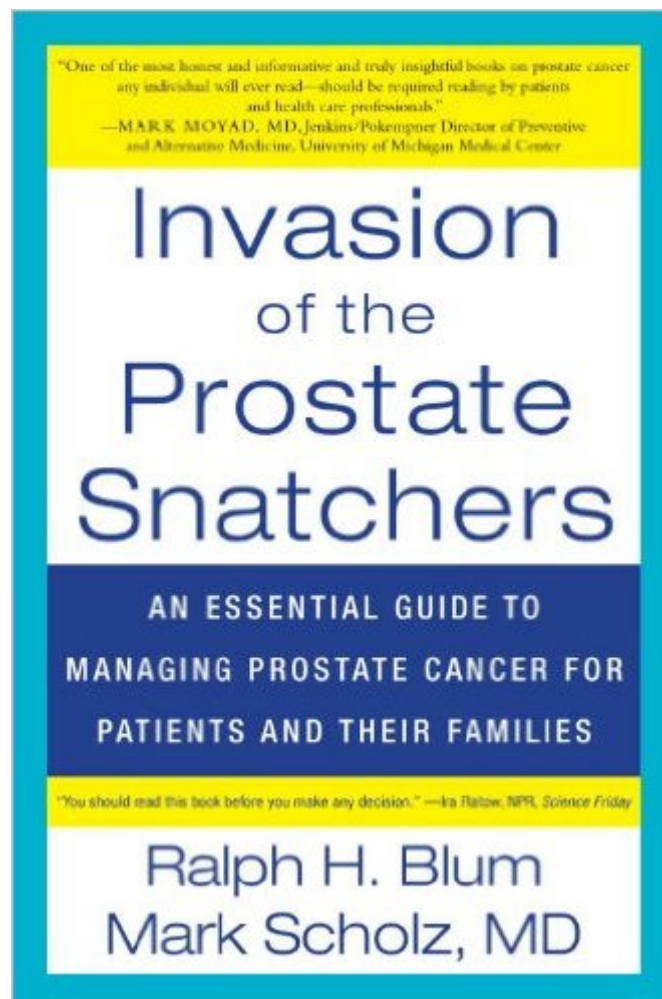


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Invasion Of The Prostate Snatchers: An Essential Guide To Managing Prostate Cancer For Patients And Their Families



Synopsis

Radical prostatectomy is still the most widely recommended treatment for prostate cancer. Yet, according to a recent study, only one out of every forty-eight men who undergo this debilitating procedure survives longer than those who forgo surgery. *Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers* reports the latest thinking on prostate cancer management in clear, easy-to-understand prose. In a unique collaboration, a patient and his doctor provide a new perspective on living with this disease. Ralph Blum's surprisingly entertaining twenty-year journey and eventual decision to treat his cancer as a chronic condition, together with Dr. Mark Scholz's presentation of the newest scientific evidence, will liberate thousands of newly diagnosed men to pursue a noninvasive approach and thereby preserve normal sexual and urinary function.

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Customer Reviews

I'll make my "full disclosure" at the end of this review, but for now, I'll just say that I did the best I could to read and review this book on its own merits rather than my own thoughts and opinions. The title, "*Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers*," tells you at once where this book is coming from. Written in a very effective manner, alternating chapters between a patient and a doctor, the book's major thesis is that surgery or other radical intervention for prostate cancer is done, too often, too soon, and too indiscriminately. The patient, Ralph Blum, has had low-risk prostate cancer for something like two decades and has been, as he says, a "Refusenik" when it comes to radical treatment. He did some hormone blockade therapy, and tried various forms of diet, natural remedies, etc. He is

now age 75 and doing well, living with the cancer. The doctor, Mark Scholz, is one of a rare breed of oncologist specialized in prostate cancer; as the book so clearly states, prostate cancer is usually the province of a urologist, who is also a surgeon, and hence pushes for immediate surgical intervention. Certainly, the book's thesis has a lot of support in the modern medical community, some of whom even go so far as to say that even PSA tests (a simple blood test, and the most common screen for potential prostate cancer) are overdone, leading to too many biopsies which in turn lead to too much radical intervention. The book talks in great detail about the side effects of radical intervention (surgery or radiation); about grades of prostate cancer; about options both usual and unusual; about hormone therapy; about diet and supplements; and much, much more.

Throughout, the book pushes a very clear message: if you have a low-risk cancer, you can postpone radical intervention for a considerable amount of time, maybe for the rest of your life. "It's about quality of life" is what we hear again and again. This book is likely the most complete and thorough treatment of the topic that I've ever read, and I've read a *lot* about prostate cancer. So, if you are newly (or not so newly) diagnosed, or have rising PSA, should you (or your loved ones) rush out, buy this book, and follow its advice? I say "no." My main reason has little to do with the book itself. You should never rely on a single source, particularly one that has an agenda. Get all the facts you can. Get multiple opinions. Hear all sides of the story. And then, and only then, make an informed decision. Another is that if you are looking for a reason to avoid radical intervention, this book will hand you everything you've ever wanted. One danger is that you stop there, short of looking at the issue from all sides. Another danger is not reading the book closely, and not distinguishing between low risk cancer and the higher risk forms. You should not play a potential game of "you bet your life" based on a single source book that gives you the answers you want. Alas, things are not simple in the world of prostate cancer, and you are going to have to do the hard work necessary to make good decisions about your care. (This same argument applies, by the way, to just listening to the urologist's almost inevitable recommendation of surgery. Get multiple viewpoints before making such an important decision!) Finally, although the book is rich, interesting, and filled with facts, there are some things that simply put me off. Co-author Ralph Blum (an author noted for his work on Runes and UFOs) describes, early in the book, how his wife, using a gold-tipped needle, drained out negative energy from his prostate through a point on his ear. Now, who am I to say whether there is something to this? But it did make me wonder. And, Dr. Mark Scholz, the other co-author, makes the following incredible statement: "The prostate, however, has a strong capsule and a muscular structure surrounding it to compress and then fire its product, the sperm, at the intended target--- an unfertilized egg." Perhaps this egregious error will be edited out in

the final version, and there can't be any question that Dr. Scholz knows better (sperm is NOT produced by the prostate). But how on earth did this statement get in the book? And that makes me ask, what else is in here--- that is perhaps much more subtle--- that is also dead wrong? I recommend this book if it is part of a group of readings intended to give a complete picture. I don't, however, recommend that you read this book and nothing else. My full disclosure: I am a prostate cancer survivor. Together with my wife, we did extensive research and consultations, and determined that surgery was the right answer for my grade of cancer. We fully understood the potential side effects and were prepared for them. I did the surgery and we have never looked back. Yes, there have been side effects. One of them is the knowledge that the rest of my years are secured. That's the ultimate in quality of life. What is right for me or someone else is *not* an argument for you to do the same. So, one last time I'll say, get the facts--- all the facts--- and make your decision on that basis.

As one who has experienced radiation seed implants as a treatment for prostate cancer and has been glad I made that choice, I'm probably not the most objective person to review this book. On the one hand, I agree with the authors that there are probably too many unnecessary prostate surgeries in this country, but on the other, there are also probably too many premature deaths from men who wait too long to take action. This book has the distinction of approaching the problem from both the doctor's and the patient's point of view. The authors express their perspectives in alternate chapters and while their conclusions are often qualified, the general thrust of the book is that less is more. This may or may not be so, depending on the individual case, but I'm afraid that the catchy commercial title as well as the bold subtitle (NO MORE UNNECESSARY BIOPSIES, RADICAL TREATMENT OR LOSS OF SEXUAL POTENCY) may discourage men who need treatment from seeking it. However, the book is lucid and well-written throughout, and if read carefully and with an open mind provides valuable information on the various options for the prostate patient. And the doctor/patient alternation is a model that more medical books should follow.

I ordered this book to read for myself, and to share with my some very good friends of mine a couple, where the man has recently been diagnosed with stage one prostate cancer. I thought this book would be especially helpful to him, because he is so early in the progression of the cancerous cells, and his doctor reassured him that they are slow-growing. He'd already had the biopsy, though, and the doctor's recommendation was to either have the radiation with the "seed" implants, or to have surgery to remove the prostate. Now, it's important that I tell you, this doctor has a fine

reputation, a long career, and is trusted here. He is also a personal friend of my friend, so I doubt the doc was telling him to go with these treatments just line the pockets of the medical staff. This doctor, with years of experience, and with his friend in mind, recommended surgery. So, my friend will have the surgery, and he wasn't interested in reading this book about alternative treatments and "living with" the cancer for years, slow-growing or not. He said he wants it out, and he wants to move on with his life, and that's that. He's made up his mind and he doesn't want to muddy the issue. For people who have not already made a decision about treatment, who want to consider more options, who are afraid of the sexual side effects or the incontinence that can follow surgery, who don't want to go through radiation and suffer those side effects, this is a good book to review. It's a good book for those exploring options, reading with an open mind. A warning, though: don't get caught up in stupid conspiracy theories. The title is too inflammatory, too accusing. Read this in the way of the 12-Step Groups: "take what you want, and leave the rest." Find what is helpful or interesting to you, and ignore the rest. This is a resource, some more information and discussion on the issue, not the new gospel truth.

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