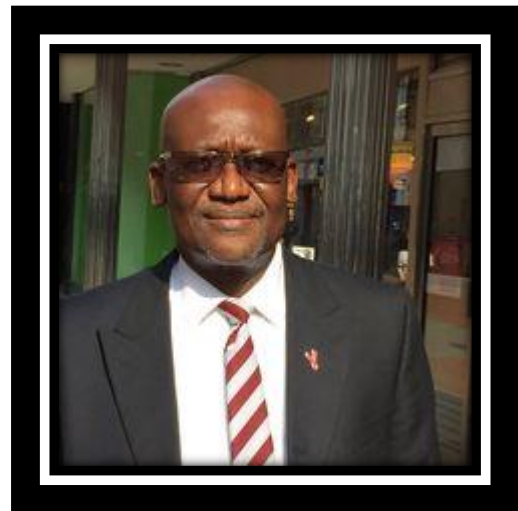


Victor Koroma

My prostate cancer story.

“MEN! Brothers, please do not make the same mistake I made. Take every opportunity to present yourself for testing if you identify with the risk factors.’ Leaving it until it’s too late is not an option.”



Victor has been a keen supporter of sharing information and health messages to his community peers for many years. He is the General Manager for the Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE), an organisation based in Reading whose aim is to promote equality, diversity and community cohesion.

“In 2015, ACRE I was asked by the local NHS CCG to help promote prostate cancer awareness among men in ethnic minority communities in Reading. We were given boxes of flyers and booklets which I helped distribute, sometimes taking them to shops and other premises frequented by men from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. However, I did not present myself for testing.

In 2016, ACRE was approached by Reading Lions Club to promote their annual prostate cancer testing event. I put in a lot of effort but did not present myself for testing.

Why? It could be for several reasons: I did not believe myself to be at risk; this was something that affected other men, not me; the procedure would be intrusive so I would save myself the embarrassment; traditionally, men did not present themselves for treatment unless that were actually ill. Take your pick.

In 2017, Reading Lions club approached us again because of our success in supporting them the previous year.

This time I said to myself, “if you are so good in selling the product, why are you not using it?”

I then presented myself for testing at the Reading Lions event. Two weeks later I was alerted (by letter) that I might have prostate cancer.

Honestly - I had felt I was in good health, but with some failings which I dismissed as part of the ageing process.

After three further PSA tests and a biopsy, the diagnosis was confirmed and I started treatment on 1 August 2017,

I had radical prostatectomy that would require on-going treatment to deal with the side effects. (I was 61 years. My next specialist appointment is 10 December 2021.)

Since then, I have resolved to use every opportunity to alert my fellow men that they should present themselves for testing, even if it is just to satisfy themselves that at that time they were not at risk.

I have initiated a Men's Group "WE, MEN!" in our portfolio of services at ACRE and the aim is to provide information, advice and guidance to men in the community. Part of the offering of the group is to celebrate International Men's Day in November and highlight issues including health concerns affecting men".

What does Quality of life mean to me?

"The ability to live a normal life as possible with minor adjustments, as necessary. Prostate Cancer ushered in a traumatic change that I sometimes struggle to cope with physically and mentally. However, with a supportive family, and a fantastic wife they have made sure that I do not dwell on the past. Together we try and live as normal a life as the circumstances allow.

My gain from this experience lies in being able to alert other men not to be presumptive when it comes to their health."