

# Prostate cancer rates exploding

By TAMARA KOEHLER  
 Californian staff writer

While common cancers like lung and colon are declining among Californians, prostate cancer rates have doubled, according to a new state health department report.



**Rice**  
 Experts say better screening and a new blood test that helps detect prostate cancer are the probable reasons behind the increase. The number of reported prostate cancer cases doubled from

## More victims detected; black men vulnerable

11,976 in 1988 to 22,242 in 1992. Black males have the highest rates in California for all cancers, including prostate cancer, the study found. African-American men are 1.4 times more likely to develop prostate cancer than whites, and twice as likely as Hispanics. Black males are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer as whites and 2.9 times as likely as Hispanics, the report found.

Doctors say they are uncertain why cancer rates among black men are higher but suspect several socio-economic reasons.

"It could be genetic, and it could

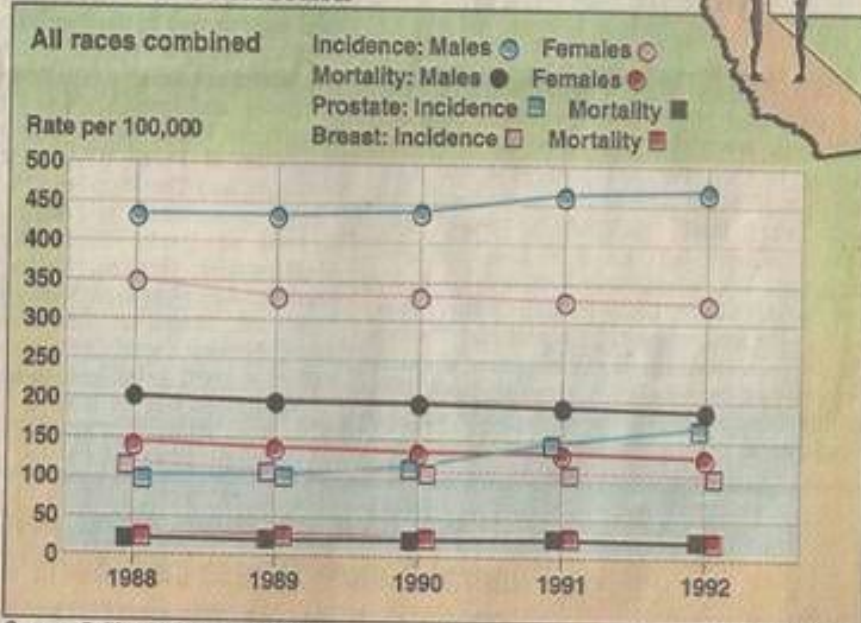
be that black men aren't getting checked for prostate cancer soon enough or as often as other groups," said Dr. Kevin M. Rice, a radiologist with Kern Radiology Medical Group.

Poverty and a lack of medical insurance are other probable factors in the increased rate for black men, Rice said.

By age 50, 50 percent of men will harbor cancerous cells in their prostate gland. By age 80, 80 percent of men will have evidence of prostate cancer.

"Usually, something else such as  
 ► Please turn to REPORT / B2

## Cancer in California



THE CALIFORNIAN