New Prostate Cancer Tests Look Promising

ThinkReliability
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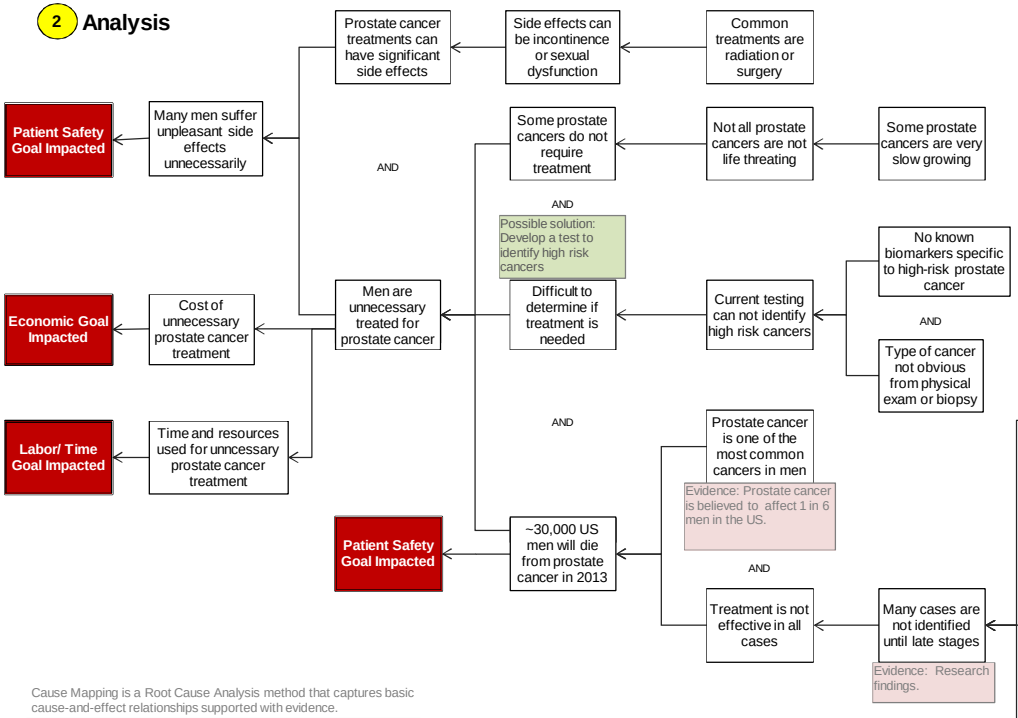
1 Problem

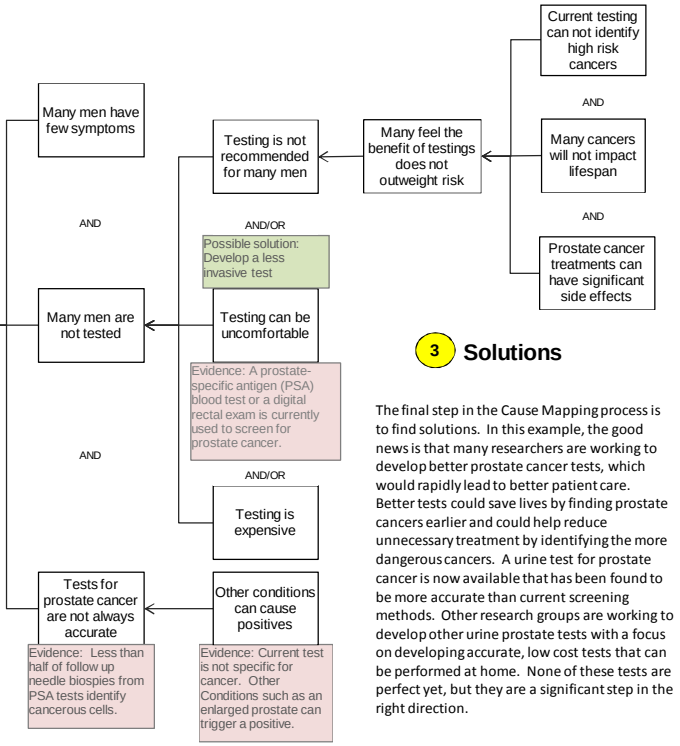
What	Problem(s)	Men are dying from prostate cancer, many are treated unnecessarily for prostate cancer
When	Date	Ongoing
	Different, unusual, unique	Not all prostate cancers are deadly, no definitive test for prostate cancer
Where	Facility, site	Healthcare facilities nationwide
	Task being performed	Screening for and treating prostate cancer

Impact to the Goals

Safety	Many men suffer unpleasant side effects unnecessarily
Safety	~30,000 US men will die from prostate cancer in 2013
Economic	Cost of unnecessary prostate cancer treatment
Labor/ Time	Time and resources used for unnecessary prostate cancer treatment

2 Analysis





3 Solutions

The final step in the Cause Mapping process is to find solutions. In this example, the good news is that many researchers are working to develop better prostate cancer tests, which would rapidly lead to better patient care. Better tests could save lives by finding prostate cancers earlier and could help reduce unnecessary treatment by identifying the more dangerous cancers. A urine test for prostate cancer is now available that has been found to be more accurate than current screening methods. Other research groups are working to develop other urine prostate tests with a focus on developing accurate, low cost tests that can be performed at home. None of these tests are perfect yet, but they are a significant step in the right direction.

One of the factors that leads to so many deaths from prostate cancer is that it is generally found at later stages. Most patients have few symptoms with early state prostate cancer and current screening methods for prostate cancer are far from perfect. Conditions other than prostate cancer, such as enlarged prostates, can result in positives with blood tests for prostate cancer. Many prostate cancers grow so slowly that they will not impact a patient's life span and do not require treatment, but there is currently no test that can accurately determine whether a prostate cancer is dangerous.

This inability to distinguish between types of prostate cancer is what leads to so many being treated unnecessarily for prostate cancer. Many patients opt for treatment once prostate cancer is found because they have no way of really knowing whether it's safe to leave the cancer untreated. But treatment is not without significant costs, both financially and in suffering.

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

CAUSE MAPPING
Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis

Step 1	Problem	What's the Problem?
Step 2	Analysis	Why did it happen?
Step 3	Solutions	What will be done?