Today’s New York Times book review [1] of Invasion of the Prostate Snatchers [2]: No More Unnecessary Biopsies, Radical Treatment or Loss of Sexual Potency caught ACSH’s Dr. Gilbert Ross’ attention. The book’s thesis reinforces ACSH’s long-held opinion that many prostate cancer patients and their doctors rush toward surgery before assessing the potential adverse effects of possibly needless intervention. The book, authored by cultural anthropologist and prostate cancer patient Ralph Blum, along with oncologist Dr. Mark Scholz, urges patients to “slow up and take a deep breath” after receiving a prostate cancer diagnosis. Dana Jennings, himself a prostate cancer survivor, paints a sad picture of prostate cancer in his book review:

As for patients, their rational thinking has been short-circuited by the word ‘cancer.’ Scared, frantic and vulnerable — relying on a doctor’s insight — they are ripe to being sold on surgery as their best option. Just get it out.

Jon Entine, an American Enterprise Institute scholar and science journalist, joined ACSH staffers at our Dispatch meeting this morning and agrees the public needs to look at cancer in a more nuanced way. “The radioactivity of the word ‘cancer,’ which is actually much more complex than just a death sentence, hides the fact that it reflects a range of potential infirmities differing in severity,” he says.

Having discussed the topic with many men, ACSH’s Dr. Elizabeth Whelan strongly agrees. “The moral of the story is that men and their loved ones need to really think long and hard about whether to proceed with surgery and consider other, non-invasive options. Men are more likely to die with it than because of it.”