

## Blind faith: Do we place too much confidence in cancer tests?

My previous post presented data showing that [the PSA test for prostate cancer harms more men than it helps](#)...[However,] many readers...insist that the PSA test saved them or someone they know, and they dismiss the massive evidence of overdiagnosis and overtreatment as irrelevant.

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I received an email on this issue from science journalist Gary Taubes, renowned [for his writings on diet](#) ...and other medical topics...Here are Taubes's comments, in italics:

*A friend just sent me your post on the PSA test, which I thought was great. The only thing that kept nagging at me was your doctor's statement that "he knew someone whose life had just been saved by the test." My question is whether such a thing is possible.*

...

*A woman gets a mammogram, learns she has a tumor, has treatment and lives. Both she and her MD naturally assume that the mammogram saved her life, although, who knows. Maybe the cancer never would have killed her...If the woman gets a mammogram, learns she has a tumor, has treatment, and dies anyway, both she and her MD assume that had they only gotten the mammogram earlier, she would have lived. Although, who knows, maybe her cancer was such, as oncologists now believe, that no matter when the mammogram detected it, it would have been too late.*

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why We Overrate the Lifesaving Power of Cancer Tests](#)**