Day 3,081 — PSA Discussion With Doctor

Just for grins and giggles, I asked her the $64,000 question: How do you define biochemical recurrence?

April 18, 2019 By Dan Zeller

While waiting for my appointment with the doctor this afternoon, I got caught up on reading about the new Datsun 280ZX in the waiting room in the May 1981 edition of Road & Track magazine. Seriously. That thing belonged in the National Archives, not the doctor's waiting room. Needless to say, it was a fun trip down memory lane, as I had just graduated from college three months earlier and was driving my 1974 Ford Galaxie 500 (my first car).

The discussion with the doctor went about as expected. In a nutshell: Continue to monitor; no action needed at this point given my PSA level and my PSA doubling time of 155 months. (Calculated using the Memorial Sloan-Kettering PSADT nomogram.)

She told me something new, too, concerning the explanation for some of the very minor fluctuations in PSA levels. I knew that physical activity and having orgasms before a blood draw could impact your PSA level, but she said that even variations in your hydration level can cause minor variations in your PSA readings. Interesting.

Just for grins and giggles, I asked her the $64,000 question: How do you define biochemical recurrence?

There was quite a long pregnant pause before she responded, "That's a difficult question to answer." She explained the that it's been defined many ways and, while she never did answer my question directly, my impression was that she was in the "two or more consecutive increases in your PSA level" camp.

One thing the doctor said, too, was that she has seen cases where patients PSAs start increasing and then plateau and sit there for years without much change at all and no need for intervention.

She also suggested that, given where my PSA level was and how slowly it was moving, that we could retest in six months instead of sticking to the four month schedule that I've been using for the last three and a half years. I agreed. I return on 22 October 2019.

Again, the meeting went pretty much as I expected it would, and I'm okay with what we discussed.

I had a great trip to Switzerland in the first half of the month despite some dodgy weather (which is to be expected in northern climates in April). If you're interested in reading about it (or at least just looking at some photos), you can check it out on my other blog, Travelin' Dan.

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