‘Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity (Hans Oh’s eHealth Blog, 2008).’ Australian men’s have a shorter life expectancy compare to Australian females with males die 5 years earlier (Richardson & Smith, 2011). Men are more likely to get health problems and serious illness in Australia. Australian men are likely to shy away from medical treatment than women so their health status is poor and complicated. Poor health knowledge and reluctance to accept a healthier lifestyle is also a key point for men to have health related problems. Health is greatly determined by social factors such as education, employment and earnings. (Better Health Channel, 2011). Men’s health is a social problem and prostate cancer is a serious health issue in Australia, especially in the ageing population (Barraclough & Gardener, 2008). Prostate cancer is one of the most major health issues of men’s in Australia and it is an important challenges for patients and health care professionals. Australian older generation is increasing and men with prostate cancer are also growing. (Richardson & Smith, 2011). This literature review explains about the barriers for men accessing health services, the importance of health, the most common health issue faced by Australian men, which is prostate cancer, its health promotion strategies, the role of nurse to address this issue which impacts on health status of men and how prostate cancer link to one of the priority areas of men’s health policy.

Access to or use of health care service is important to keep good health. WHO provides a universal health care which distributes resources equally as health care service is an important social determinants of health. Though, most of the Australians benefit from the health care system, a few groups of Australian men’s are facing considerable barriers to reach health care. Australia and in some western countries, male receiving lower health care than females which can be the main reason for men to have poor health outcomes and lower life expectancy. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). Men’s attitude and behaviors towards health care system and the health outcomes are related to some complex factors including biological sex, gender, age and other range of determining health such as education, employment and accessibility and the kind of health care services supplied. Instead of looking to the individual itself the faulty system including poor outcome from relationship breakdown and the social determinants are the reason for poorer health outcome in males. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010).

Generally, men are poorer users of the health care system compare to women. There are many obstructions for men to get health care including poor recognition, denial of ill-health, absence of male providers and poor entrée to health care system. Besides this, lack of privacy, approach of providers and negligence of care especially in the area of sexual and reproductive health services are significant barriers for men to seek health care. It is also recognized that skills of the health care professionals are not enough for dealing with men. Stereotype attitude of providers are a barrier for men involvement in seeking health care. (Sen & Ostlin, 2010). Low levels of educational status and high cost of health services are also some reason for men not seeking health care. Lack of doctors in specialty health services and shortage of male health care professionals are other obstructions to men accessing health services. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). Feeling of embarrassment and hesitant to discuss sensitive issues with health professionals or asking for a male person is also a reason for older men’s not seeking health care. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.).

The services of health care are being closed outside the working hours are the main reason for males to seek compact health care system. The male friendly health services including Pit Stop and MensLine are the nature of services which impact on male help seeking behaviors. It is significant for males to receive proper information about when to receive and associated health information; therefore, they can benefit from life and can accomplish their responsibility they play in the Australian community. Males needs to know the cost of their health by seeking information, information about how can diminish health risks and how can seek help which is a power that enables them to employment, support and care which helps them to take care of their own health as well as their family, friends, and the community. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010).

In Australia, one in three males over the age of 40 years reports of reproductive health problem. Prostate cancer was the fifth principal reason of male death and second leading causes of cancer deaths in Australian men; it was around 2938 death in 2007. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). It is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia. Prostate cancer is the uncontrolled growth of cells of the prostate gland which is situated at the base of the urinary bladder ( MedicineNet.com, 2011). The side effects of the prostate cancer including erectile dysfunction, impotence, urinary incontinence, relationship difficulty, anxiety, depression and emotional disturbances are also some health issue in an individual’s life. Increasing age is one of the risks factors of prostate cancer especially over the age of 60 years. Family history, lifestyle and environmental factors such as intake of high animal fat and protein are related to prostate cancer. Prostate cancer often asymptomatic and disease detection become very difficult. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). Screening and health education helps in early detection of prostate cancer which increases surveillance rate and leads to favorable health outcome for males. Developing and offering good services to men leads to optimal health outcome for all Australian men. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). Encouraging males to understand valuable responsibilities they play in their family and community life and through policies especially with male health and modify health program, health and wellbeing can be improved particularly those who with poorer health outcomes (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010a).

Gaps in male literacy and lack of knowledge on reproductive issue lead to anxiety and also to delay in screening and treatment which results in poor health. Andrology Australia’s Needs Analysis of Community Education in Australia on Male Reproductive Health found that most of the participants on their survey were conscious of prostate cancer but there were knowledge deficiency about prostate, its function and how it affects by disease. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). In 2010, Australian Government launched their first National male health policy. The policies main aim was to strengthen or improve the male health and to achieve equal health outcome for all population groups of male. It promote governments, health organizations and communities to work jointly to take actions, and developed six priority areas including optimal health outcomes for males, health equity among population groups of males, enhanced health for males at various life stages, a center on preventive health based on male health and improved entry to health care for males. (Templeton, Sainsbury &Thompson, 2011).

During the policy consultation participants suggested that to receive an optimal health outcome for males on prostate cancer prostate screening program is important (Prostate Specific Antigen Testing). Positive result leads to anxiety but even it is diagnosed it never impact on men’s health or shorter life expectancy. More than half of the males on the Andrology study had an elevated level of PSA and anomalous prostate detected during digital rectal examination and they had benign prostate hyperplasia which is not a harmful condition. Surgical removal of prostate or radiotherapy can save lives but all treatment has risks and adverse effects therefore, the Australian Government considers that PSA test decision is personal choice. Males who is requesting PSA test needs appropriate counseling by their doctor about the advantages and side effects of it. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). A community survey conducted from a telephone directory database in Sydney, Australia about PSA screening reported that a total of 514 men participated in the survey between the ages of 50- 70 years and 61.2 % of men interested in screening and a positive interest seen as they get aged. When asked later in the survey 68.1 % wanted to have PSA screening. (Gattellari & Ward, 2004).

Health promotion strategies are an important part in prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment and for the entire health. Visiting to male health clinics in a regular or occasional basis in the community centre or in the General Practioner’s clinic can be a great help for men. Some males require male practitioner especially in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Australian Government introduces a wide range of programs to give health care to all Australians. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). The Government funds the Men’s Health Ambassador Speakers Program through Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. This program provides proper information to aid men in avoiding incontinence and for early treatment for the condition. Through continuing professional development Andrology Australia gives awareness about male’s health issues and they aimed on strengthening community capacity. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). Men’s health units are educational and training sector. The Men’s Health Clinic in Bendigo assist, understand and manage men’s health issues. They provide annual health check-up, health assessments, information and support and assist men to attain a healthier lifestyle. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010).

Andrology Australia gives information and resources to males and health expert about different health problem especially about prostate cancer. National Continence Management Strategy has different continent pamphlets which gives resources about men’s health. Prostate Cancer Research Centre in Australia is a support group which developed better diagnostic test, screening tools and treatment for prostate cancer. Government provides funding for efficient coordination of prostate cancer research and the development of the evidence based areas which assist in improving the outcome with prostate cancer. National Health and Medical Research Council is a Government funding organization which supports to build the evidence base on prostate cancer. Association of Prostate Cancer Support Groups South Australia offer support and information to patients, families and their carers. Face-to face online training is provided by Round Cancer Australia associated with Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. (National Male Health Policy, n. d.). Prostate Cancer Education Council is a national group which interested in education and awareness week programs providing with screening site with public relation materials and screening forms (Held-Warmkessel, 2006).

Nurses play an active role in assessment and disease management. Primary prevention includes education, counseling and encourage individuals to engage in cancer prevention activities. Secondary prevention is very important in prostate cancer which includes screening and early diagnosis. Providing support and accurate information is crucial in the diagnosis process and in treatment decision making. Nurses help the client after surgery for early prognosis and helps in the treatment process. Nurses educate the patient about the importance of the follow up which comes in the tertiary prevention. (Wallace, 2008). A nurse practitioner in the Men’s Health clinic give education to the community groups for health promotion and a population based assessment in the clinic as well as in the workplace. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010). Nurse play the role of advocate as it is important because of reduced health care supply and care management. Risk assessment and screening on prostate cancer is vital to clients, their family and community education about risk reduction strategies. Specialty nurses who are in research may involve in the coordination of all stages of prostate clinical research. Chart reviews and patient assessment identifies patient participation. Nurses usually prepare consent forms for organizational review and ensure that the patient understands the treatment plan, risk and benefits of the study. It is also the responsibility of the nurse to evaluate and document the problems. Support the people who are at danger of getting prostate cancer and explain them that it is not easy for them to accept. (Cohen, Ferrell, Vrabel, Visovsky, & Schaefer, 2010).

In addition, nurse should help at-risk men to participate in screening, while doing so they should consider the facilities and obstruction. Health professional should assist for Digital Rectal Examination. Explain patients and their family about why and how the diagnostic test is conducted and help them to understand the meaning of prostate cancer stages. These nursing interventions help the individual to relieve stress about diagnostic tests. (Wallace & Powel, 2004). As a navigator nurse coordinates care and decreases the barriers and as a mentor nurse give educational support, resources. Besides this, health professionals offer physical care emotional support, family education, meetings to deal with psychological issues, assessment, symptom management, administrative role and research. Nurse carefully listens to patients, their needs, emotions and they clarify their worries also they coordinate their care. Compassionate care is the responsibility of the nurse and remembers that patient satisfaction and keeping confidentiality is significant. (Cohen et al., 2010).

In conclusion, Male health issues are a public problem in Australia and usually men are reluctant to go for health services because of shyness about sensitive issues, the expenses of the services, and sometimes lack of knowledge. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that prostate cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancers for men in Australia. Life expectancy and survivals are connected with earlier diagnosis together with management. (O’Shaughnessy, & Laws, 2009). Early detection and treatment can effectively decrease the cost associated with treatment and disease in the later stage. (Held-Warmkessel, 2006). National male health policies can bring optimal health outcome through screening events and earlier recognition of the disease condition. Though, males have poorer health outcome it can be improved only if Governments, health organizations, community and individuals work jointly to take actions which can achieve through policies and its priority areas for actions. (Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 2010a).