Table 3

Common presentations of urinary retention in men in primary care and emergency departments

History	Physical examination	Possible aetiology
Previous history of urinary retention or near retention/worsening urinary symptoms	Enlarged, firm, non-tender, non-nodular prostate on DRE; prostate examination may be normal	BPH
Fever; dysuria; back, perineal, rectal pain	Tender, warm, boggy prostate; possible penile discharge	Acute prostatitis
Weight loss; constitutional signs and symptoms, back pain, anaemia	Enlarged nodular prostate; prostate examination may be normal	Advanced prostate cancer
Pain; swelling of foreskin or penis	Oedema of penis with non-retractable foreskin; externally applied penile device	Phimosis, paraphimosis, or oedema caused by externally placed constricting device