CHAPTER 6

The Social Dimensions of Prostate Cancer in Gay Men’s Sexuality

Gary W. Dowsett, Duane Duncan, Andrea Waling, Daniel R. du Plooy, and Garrett P. Prestage

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Much of the research on men and prostate cancer has neglected gay and bisexual men. Assumptions are made that gay men are men too, so they must have the same experiences as heterosexual men. Recent research, however, has shown marked differences between gay and bisexual men and heterosexual men in diagnosis, treatment, care, and support. This chapter considers the recent research that is beginning to understand gay men’s different experiences of prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment, arguing that a focus on the social dimensions of gay men’s sexuality is needed. Three issues are explored: gay sex and sexuality, gay relationships and gay community, and HIV infection.

KEY TERMS

gay community, gay men, gay relationships, HIV infection, sex, sex-based sociality, sexuality
REFERENCES


46. Dowsett GW. I’ll show you mine, if you’ll show me yours: Gay men, masculinity research, men’s studies, and sex. Theory and Society. 1993; 22 (5): 697–709.

Other Battles Some Gay Men With Prostate Cancer Face. While gay men seem to have about the same rates of prostate cancer as men in general – making it the most diagnosed cancer among all men, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – a review conducted by Rosser and colleagues suggests that gay survivors have poorer sexual functioning and lower quality of life. Researchers' interviews with men hint at numerous reasons why. But for many gay men, working with a provider who knows and honors their sexual orientation is important in part because more often than straight men, "sex, at some point has been a critical part of their personal story," Hoyt says. The social dimension of prostate cancer in gay men's sexuality. Much of the research on men and prostate cancer has neglected gay and bisexual men. Assumptions are made that gay men are men too, so they must have the same experiences as heterosexual men. Recent research, however, has shown marked more. Much of the research on men and prostate cancer has neglected gay and bisexual men. Assumptions are made that gay men are men too, so they must have the same experiences as heterosexual men. Recent research, however, has shown marked differences between gay and bisexual men and heterosexual m...
Prostate cancer is cancer of the prostate. The prostate is a gland in the male reproductive system that surrounds the urethra just below the bladder. Most prostate cancers are slow growing. Cancerous cells may spread to other areas of the body, particularly the bones and lymph nodes. It may initially cause no symptoms. In later stages, symptoms include pain or difficulty urinating, blood in the urine, or pain in the pelvis or back. Benign prostatic hyperplasia may produce similar symptoms. Other late stages of prostate cancer are largely the same among gays and others, but sexual functioning issues and quality of life bring different concerns. Like many men in his position, Rose turned to the internet for information. But because he included “gay” in his search terms, he didn't find it. "I think I found maybe one article, and it wasn't real helpful," says Rose, whose urologist didn't know he is gay. [See: What Only Your Partner Knows About Your Health.] Though the internet landscape has changed since his diagnosis in 2003, Rose's experience is still representative of the lack of awareness and research surrounding how prostate cancer may affect gay men differently than straight men. Men who have sex with men (MSM) are less likely to get regular prostate cancer screenings, and those who are diagnosed are less likely to have familial and social support, according to research cited by the National Institutes of Health. And if their health care provider is not culturally competent, gay and bisexual men are much less likely to understand how treatment will impact their quality of life. He joined a prostate cancer support group specifically for gay and bisexual men at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan, one of several organized by the national advocacy organization MaleCare. Being with other queer men allowed us to be very open about our feelings and our sexuality and to be empathetic with each other, Brass said. Factors affecting sexual adjustment in men with cancer include: Altered body image due to weight changes, hair loss or surgical disfigurement; Change in hormonal status due to treatment: Changes in sex hormones (androgens such as testosterone) affect libido and ability to orgasm; and. For more information on prostate cancer, including diagnoses, types of treatments, and some useful tools, videos and animations, see Prostate Cancer. Sexuality, body image and quality of life after high dose or conventional chemotherapy for metastatic breast cancer. Can J Hum Sex. 1997; 6: 1-8. Prostate cancer occurs in the prostate gland, which is located just below the bladder in males and surrounds the top portion of the tube that drains urine from the bladder (urethra). This illustration shows a normal prostate gland and a prostate with a tumor. Prostate cancer is cancer that occurs in the prostate. The prostate is a small walnut-shaped gland in males that produces the seminal fluid that nourishes and transports sperm. Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. Many prostate cancers grow slowly and are confined to the prostate gland, where they may not cause serio