

Prostate cancer survivors' experiences with follow-up care after completing treatment: a qualitative study

Robin Urquhart, Sarah Scruton, Samantha Radford, Cynthia Kendall, Elias Hirsch
Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University

INTRODUCTION

- Prostate cancer is a common and life-altering condition among Canadian men
- Despite evidence of high health care utilization after cancer treatment, little is known about how prostate cancer survivors experience care after primary treatment
- We explored prostate cancer survivors' experiences with their follow-up care

METHODS

- Qualitative inquiry, guided by qualitative description
- One-on-one, semi-structured interviews with prostate cancer survivors who had completed primary treatment
- Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically

FINDINGS



Theme 1: Physician roles and continuity during follow-up care

I've had a succession of people. And that in itself has been kind of unsatisfactory. I mean they were all competent, I think. But it's a chain. I would have preferred, of course, to stay with one person throughout. [P1]

Theme 2: Feeling unprepared to manage the long-term effects of their cancer and/or its treatment

If they don't even contact you to see how you're doing, how in the hell are you going to get anything, right? And of course, I don't know what's out there. [P4]

Theme 3: Ongoing physical and psychosocial unmet needs negatively impact optimal recovery

I think you can chalk [my emotional and psychosocial issues] up to the erectile dysfunction... I mean there's a huge level of sadness over that. And not only for myself, but also my wife. [P7]

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Although follow-up care experiences are varied, many ongoing needs are not met by our health system. Issues related to coordination and continuity of care continue to challenge survivors' experiences with follow-up care. These issues are longstanding in the cancer survivorship literature and likely require new ways of thinking and working.