

# Engaging prostate cancer patients to improve specialist nursing care

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## Introduction

Prostate cancer nurse specialists must develop support services to ensure quality patient education and care. The objective of this study was to identify topics and methods which optimised patient engagement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of support services.

## Methods

Observation of sessions, small focus groups with patients and interviews with service organisers were carried out in five UK prostate cancer services, either virtually or in person, from May to December 2022. These assessed the education and support needs of patients and their relatives, active participation and the delivery methods used to provide quality support. Patients (n=64) had varying disease staging and treatments, and all participants consented to observation and discussion. Thematic analysis was used to identify topics and delivery methods that increased patient engagement.

### Sources of patient and professional feedback

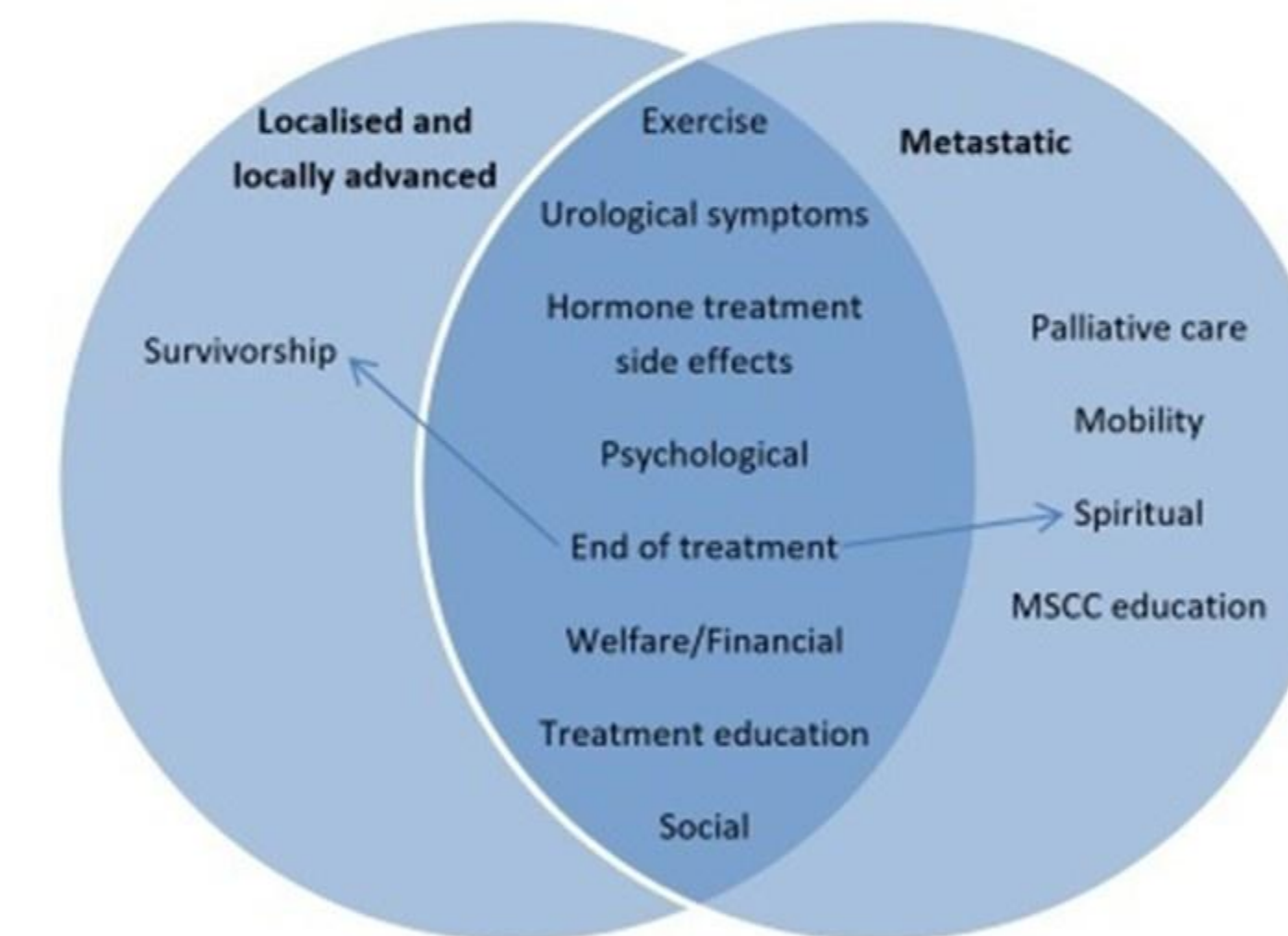
Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Group (Tackle)	A patient-led monthly virtual support group launched by Tackle Prostate Cancer to meet the unique needs of those who are living with Advanced Prostate Cancer.
THRIVE (The Royal Marsden)	A project that provides prostate cancer patients with personalised exercise programmes, including an app with exercise monitoring and support.
Life on ADT	The ADT Education Programme is a free 1.5 hour session on the side effects of ADT and how to manage them, including goal setting exercises.
The Advanced Prostate Cancer Club (APCC) (Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust)	The group is for men (and their loved ones) who are on hormone therapy or have advanced prostate cancer. The group offers information sessions, activities and courses, exercise classes, weekly quizzes, days out, pamper sessions, art classes and more.
Prostate Cancer Networking Group (Maggie's, The Royal Marsden)	The group is a 1-hour monthly meeting, alternating between virtual and face to face, allowing those with prostate cancer to meet others in a similar situation, talk about shared experience and have the opportunity to exchange helpful advice.



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## Results

Topics which optimised patient engagement were thematically grouped and ranged from urological symptoms (such as erectile dysfunction and incontinence) to welfare and financial support needs. Patient engagement significantly increased in physical activities, such as walking groups, compared to emotionally expressive activities, such as group sessions with a psychologist. While most patient experiences were positive, including increased self-esteem and independence, some struggled to engage with services where they felt the topics were not relevant or appropriate to their own experience, such as metastatic patients in groups where the majority had localised disease, and subsequently felt disengaged and unsupported by the service.



Identified support needs of prostate cancer patients

## Conclusions

Support services require development to accommodate the varying patient experiences and needs with a practical approach to optimise patient engagement and subsequently improve supportive care. Further evidence is required to evaluate the implementation of this practice and the effect this has on the nurse-patient relationship.