

CHAPTER 5

Psychological Adjustment in Gay and Bisexual Men after Prostate Cancer

Michael A. Hoyt and Brett M. Millar

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The experience of prostate cancer can exact a psychological and physical toll. Gay and bisexual men (GBM) have been underrepresented in prostate cancer care and research and represent a subpopulation at high risk for poorer health-related quality of life and psychological adjustment following diagnosis. The physical and psychological demands of prostate cancer present new circumstances to which patients and loved ones must adjust, and GBM disproportionately experience risk factors for impaired physical and emotional functioning, including general and minority-related stressors, unmet healthcare needs, and social isolation. Psychological adjustment to chronic disease is a complex and multidimensional process that constitutes more than merely the absence of psychopathology and includes both positive and negative domains. Theories of stress and coping, self-regulation, and personal growth have informed the understanding of the dynamics of psychological adjustment and its determinants. These, coupled with considerations of the unique risk and resilience factors experienced by GBM, will inform a more inclusive model of psychological adjustment to prostate cancer. This chapter integrates existing theories of psychological adjustment to chronic illness with theories of minority stress and observations from focus groups comprising GBM with prostate cancer to identify influences on adjustment across the cancer trajectory.

KEY TERMS

gay and bisexual men, minority stress, prostate cancer, psychological adjustment, sexuality

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