

CHAPTER 8

Lack of Information and Unmet Needs

Gay and Bisexual Men's Sexual Communication with Healthcare Professionals about Sex after Prostate Cancer

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CHAPTER SUMMARY

Although sexual changes after prostate cancer have specific meanings and consequences for gay and bisexual men (GBM), little is known about how GBM navigate sexual well-being support. We surveyed 124 GBM with prostate cancer and 21 male partners, and interviewed a sub-sample of 46 GBM and 7 male partners, to examine GBM's experiences of sexual communication with healthcare professionals after the onset of prostate cancer. GBM perceived a number of deficits in healthcare professional communication: heterosexuality of GBM patients was often assumed; sexual orientation disclosure was problematic; and GBM perceived rejection or lack of interest and knowledge from a majority of healthcare professionals with regard to gay sexuality and the effect of prostate cancer on GBM. Facilitators of communication were an acknowledgment of sexual orientation and exploration of the effect of prostate cancer on GBM. To improve support for GBM with prostate cancer, we conclude that healthcare professionals need to address issues of heterocentrism within prostate cancer care by improving facilitation of sexual orientation disclosure, recognizing that GBM with prostate cancer may have specific sexual and relational needs, and increasing knowledge and comfort discussing gay sexuality and gay sexual practices.

KEY TERMS

communication with healthcare professionals; gay and bisexual men, prostate cancer, psychological, sexual identity disclosure, sexuality

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