



Barriers to Psychosexual Care: The 'Psycho-Social' Part

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Cultural norms that support silence around sexual topics may hinder patients from seeking help or initiating communication with providers [1]. There is a need for a pathway managing sexual concerns with cancer survivors. Treatment is optimised when it is targeted towards a survivor's physical needs but also their relationship status and their experience of self-efficacy [1]. More intensive care such as couples counselling also helps in sexual rehabilitation [1]. If survivors are single, older, widowed, or divorced it can also be easy to assume that potency is no longer required [1]. Assumptions cannot be made; psychosexual support should be offered to the majority of patients.

It is vital that psychosexual education and rehabilitation become a standard element of survivorship care. Given the challenges that survivors face throughout their cancer journey, it is regrettable that so many suffer silently from sexual dysfunction because they are not aware of or informed about available solutions [1]. Psychosexual concerns are not often fully addressed as part of survivorship care. This is central to providing holistic survivorship care and to using assessment tools as part of care.

Reference

1. Berry DL, Blumenstein BA, Halpenny B, Wolpin S, Fann JR, Austin-Seymour M, Bush N, Karras BT, Lober WB, McCorkle R. Enhancing patient-provider communication with the electronic self-report assessment for cancer: a randomized trial. *J Clin Oncol.* 2011;29:1029–35.