

CANCER

Impaired QOL and sexual function in young male cancer survivors

Young male cancer survivors experience fatigue, and impaired quality of life (QOL) and sexual function, exacerbated by hypogonadism, according to a report published in *Cancer*.

Cancer treatment can result in androgen deficiency in young male cancer survivors, but the relationship between this deficiency and symptoms often reported by such patients—including fatigue and sexual dysfunction—is not established.

Greenfield *et al.* conducted a cross-sectional, observational study of 176 male cancer survivors and 213 healthy men aged 25–45 years. Participants self-assessed their QOL, fatigue and sexual function using a range of questionnaires.

The researchers found that cancer survivors had impaired QOL and reported more fatigue and worse general sexual function than individuals in the control group. However, self-esteem or satisfaction with partner relationships were not different between the two groups. In

cancer survivors with androgen deficiency (serum testosterone levels ≤ 10 nmol/l) the reported impairments in QOL and sexual function were more pronounced than in those men with testosterone levels within the normal range.

The researchers now hope to conduct a double-blind, placebo-controlled intervention study of testosterone replacement therapy in male cancer survivors, to determine whether QOL, sexual function and energy level can be improved. In the meantime, “all male cancer survivors should have their testosterone level measured and be considered for testosterone replacement therapy,” recommends senior researcher Richard Ross (University of Sheffield, UK).

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Original article Greenfield, D. M. *et al.* Quality of life, self-esteem, fatigue, and sexual function in young men after cancer: a controlled cross-sectional study. *Cancer* **116**, 1592–1601 (2010)