



The demonstration of erectile management techniques to men scheduled for radical prostatectomy reduces long-term regret: a comparative study.



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Introduction / Objective

Previous studies have suggested approximately 20% of men undergoing radical prostatectomy (RP) express regret at their treatment choice, citing erectile dysfunction (ED) as a major cause. The main objective was to determine whether preoperative demonstrations of intracavernosal and vacuum therapies for ED influences the decision of treatment choice, reducing long-term regret



Materials and Methods

82 consecutive men with localised prostate cancer, scheduled for RP reporting an International Index of Erectile Function % (IIEF-5) score of >21 were prospectively enrolled at a single cancer centre. Following standard pre-operative counselling, half of the men were invited to attend a further consultation for intracavernosal and vacuum therapy demonstrations. All patients were evaluated pre treatment, then 3 monthly using the IIEF-5 score and the 14- item Hospital Anxiety and Depression scale (HADS). At 1 year treatment choice changes were recorded and patients were assessed for treatment choice regret using Clarks' validated two-item regret questionnaire. Statistical analysis was performed using the Mann Whitney and Fishers' exact tests. Results were compared to a control population of 41 men who did not undergo additional ED counselling.

Results

8/41 (19%) men changed their treatment choice, opting for brachytherapy rather than RP. Only 1/41 in the control population changed their decision prior to surgery. At 1 year, one patient (2%) in the intervention group expressed regret at his treatment choice (RP) compared to eight (20%) in the control group ($p=0.03$, two-sided Fisher's exact test); ED was identified as the major cause of this regret. Although sample size is a limitation of this study statistical significance was achieved, practice has changed at our institution with all patients now receiving ED counselling as local standard care.



Conclusion

Pre-operative demonstrations of ED therapies can optimize decision making in prostate cancer and help reduce long term regret.