Prostate cancer: how do patients choose their treatment?

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Abstract

Prostate cancer remains a public health concern in France for men between 50 and 70 years old. Low-risk or intermediate-risk localised prostate cancer can be treated by a number of therapeutic options. Objective. Identify, in patients' discourse, the mechanisms and the logic involved in therapeutic decision-making. Method. Qualitative study involving 15 men aged between 53 and 70 years, treated for early-stage prostate cancer, via interviews examining diagnosis pathway, how patients perceive and cope with the illness, and how they choose a treatment. Results. The men made their choices using their own initiative during a multiple-stage process. The determining factors were: quality of relationship with physicians, wish to benefit from the available technological advances in medical care, and minimum impairment to their sexual and reproductive identity. Chances of survival did not appear to be their primary concern. Conclusion. This qualitative study reveals that men make their own decisions in terms of choice of therapy, whether encouraged by their physicians to participate or not.

KEYWORDS: choice of treatment, localised prostate cancer, patients’ involvement, qualitative study

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