

Introduction

- Does vasectomy (a safe means of permanent contraception offered to couples in a stable relationship) trigger marital breakdown?
- **There are no publications or guidelines**

Objectives

Explore an association between vasectomy & relationship breakdown. This is the first study ever.

Patients and Methods

- Local ethical approval was granted in 2012
- 1832 vasectomy procedures between 1996 and 2008 in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary
- All were sent a validated sensitive questionnaire
- Validation method: test re-test
- 13 men attending for vasectomy reversal (chosen at random) were interviewed at length

ID:

Vasectomy follow-up questionnaire

According to our records, you had a vasectomy operation between 1996 and 2008. As part of follow-up, we would like to invite you to help us by answering the following questions:

Please answer by putting a cross in the box that applies to you.

1. I am happy with the outcome of my vasectomy.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I have no regrets about my decision to have a vasectomy.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

3. My partner has no regrets following my vasectomy.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

4. Did you have wound infection immediately after the procedure?

Yes No Not sure

5. Did you have pain near the site of the wound after the procedure?

Yes No

6. Did you request vasectomy reversal?

Yes No

7. Did you have vasectomy reversal?

Yes No

8. Do you think that the vasectomy affected your sexual performance?

Yes No Not sure

9. Has your partnership status changed since your vasectomy?

No Separated Divorced Remarried

10. Do you think that the vasectomy has affected your partnership status?

Yes No

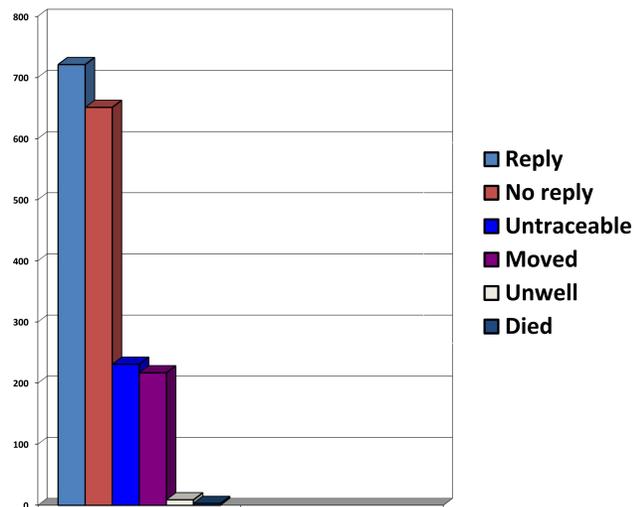
11. Year of relationship breakdown if applicable

If you have any comments, please feel free to disclose them here, they will remain anonymous

Results

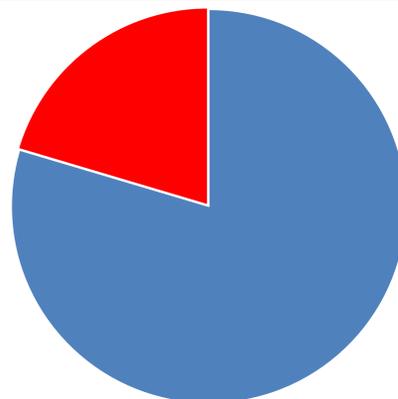
Replies

721 responded, 651 no reply, 231 untraceable, 217 had moved, 9 too severely ill to reply & 3 had died from unrelated causes



Satisfaction, pain, regrets & sexual dysfunction (all patients)

| Number (%) | Outcome |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 660 (91.5%) | Satisfied with procedure |
| 232 (32%) | Short/Long-term pain |
| 43 (6%) men & 32 (4.4%) partners | Had regrets |
| 75 (10%) | Sexual dysfunction |



- 147 (20.4%) were separated, divorced or re-married
- 49 of these (33%) blamed the vasectomy for the relationship breakdown
- 7 of 13 (54%) attending for vasectomy reversal blamed the vasectomy for the relationship breakdown

Results

Relationship breakdown

- Data from the hospital patient administration system: A significant % of the 231 untraceable & the 217 who moved were either separated or divorced
- 7 (54%) of 13 vas reversal interviewed blamed the vasectomy for the relationship breakdown
- 22 had vasectomy reversal & 35 requested but were denied reversal (not NHS procedure from April 2009)

Satisfaction, pain, regrets & sexual dysfunction (relationship breakdown)

| Number (%) | Outcome |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 121 (82%) | Satisfied with procedure |
| 48 (32.7%) | Short/Long-term pain |
| 37(25.2%)men & 32(21.8%) partners | Had regrets |
| 43 (29.3%) | Sexual dysfunction |

Comments (from patient questionnaires)

“No Complaints! – Now have prostate cancer – assume no connection – under treatment”
 “Wife wanted 3rd child 3 years after vasectomy – I said no!” [separated]
 “I did not want a vasectomy, my Ex demanded it if I wanted sex! She did not want children” [Divorced after 1 year]
 “Had the procedure twice – pain since, have gone downhill since including my relationship” [Separated]
 “Vasectomy was the worst thing I had by the NHS and I cannot get reversal” [separated]
 “Separated from girlfriend for 2 years then got back. I think having the snip seemed that I did not want kids from her. Now sorted ”

Conclusions

- Vasectomy is associated with relationship breakdown (*first study ever*)
- Sexual dysfunction, pain, regrets, unknown psychological factors may play a role
- Couples should be adequately informed & counselled

References

Howard G. The quality of marriage before and after vasectomy. *Br J Sex Med.* 1979 Sep;6(52):13-4, 57