Prostate Cancer Rehabilitation: Outcomes of a Sexual Health Clinic

Andrew Matthew¹, Leah Jamnicky¹, Kristen Currie¹, Anika Gentile¹, John Trachtenberg¹, Shabbir Alibhai¹, Antonio Finelli¹, Neil Fleshner¹, Gideon Yang¹, Lisa Osqui¹, Joyce Davison², and Dean Elterman¹

1. Department of Surgical Oncology, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, Toronto, ON, Canada
2. Department of Urologic Sciences, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada

BACKGROUND
Radical prostatectomy (RP) leaves 45–75% of patients with long-term sexual dysfunction (SD). Approximately 60% of patients report significant emotional distress related to their SD. Despite high levels of effectiveness, 30-50% of patients discontinue use of sexually assistive aids within one year. The available research exploring this gap between effectiveness and ongoing use supports a biopsychosocial perspective of SD. The Prostate Cancer Rehabilitation Clinic (PCRC), at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto, Canada, employs a biopsychosocial approach to assist patients and couples in achieving optimal sexual health and intimacy post-RP.

METHODS
We conducted a retrospective study comparing sexual health outcomes from patients who had a RP in 2006 prior to PCRC (N=304) and in 2012 after PCRC (N=342). Data are compared over a two year recovery period post-RP, including information on the use of erectile aids. Multivariable logistic regressions were conducted to detect temporal changes in sexual functioning and potential confounding factors.

RESULTS
Patients who had RP in the year of 2012 were 1.9 times more likely to have sexual function 2 years post-surgery compared to patients who had RP in 2006 (35.8% vs 19.2%, P < 0.001). This finding was maintained when controlling for treatment type (open vs robotic RP), surgeon, and D'Amico risk scores. Patients who attended the PCRC were more likely to take erectile medications 2 year post-surgery (86.2% vs 38%) and had a stable level of intimacy and anxiety over the 2 year course. Patients and partners who attended the PCRC also reported a very high rate of satisfaction (95.8% for patients and 99.6% for partners) with the care they received at the clinic.

CONCLUSION
The PCRC has proved beneficial to RP patients and their partners in achieving better sexual health, continued use of pro-erectile medications, and maintenance of intimacy and low anxiety.