PROSTATE CANCER AND THE IMPACT ON COUPLES: A QUALITATIVE METASYNTHESIS

Nicole Collaço¹, Carol Rivas², Lauren Matheson¹, Johana Nayoan², Richard Wagland², Obrey Alexis¹, Anna Gavin³, Adam Glaser⁴, Eila Watson¹

¹Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Oxford Brookes University, ²Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Southampton, ³ Centre for Public Health, Queen's University Belfast; ⁴ Leeds Institute of Cancer and Pathology, Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Leeds

Introduction

- Prostate cancer (PCa) is the most common cancer in men in the UK [1] and the second most common cancer worldwide [2].
- Increasing numbers of men are living with and beyond their diagnosis and experiencing long term impact of PCa and treatment [3].

Method

- This systematic qualitative metasynthesis draws upon Noblit and Hare's metaethnographic approach [5].
- Data synthesis included studies that
- Often the primary source of support for men with PCa is their intimate partner [4]. Side effects of treatment and management of PCa often affects the couple's quality of life and dynamics of their intimate relationship.
- Better understanding of the experiences of couples affected by PCa is needed to establish and provide the most effective support for them.

Objective

To review and interpret existing qualitative literature on the experiences' of couples affected by PCa.

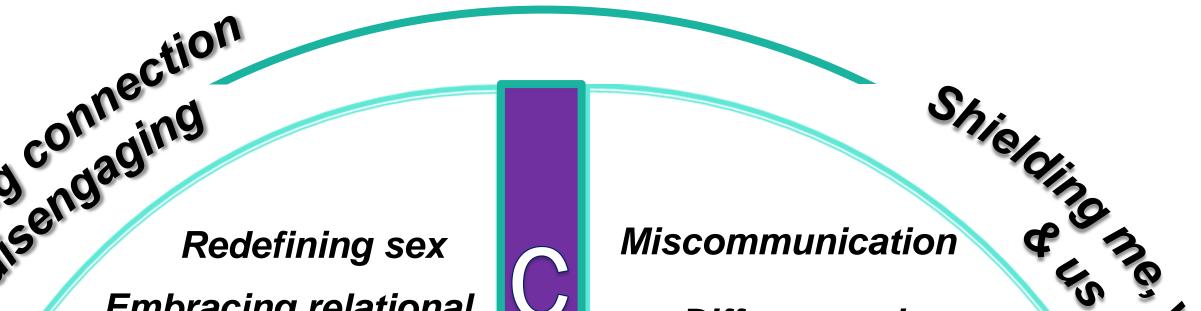
focussed on the experiences of men with PCa and their partners to inform overarching interpretations.



Results

- Thirty-four relevant studies were included.
- Study samples lacked recruitment of couples with ethnic diversity and same-sex couples.
- Seven constructs were developed from the studies included and are highlighted below.





Being a partner & its challenges Assumed responsibilities: Information provider Emotional caretaker to husband R **Provider of practical support Challenges:** Difficulties in balancing work/family/ caregiving roles Conflict/tension in couples due to caregiving Being unsupported & side-lined **Restricted disclosure** Unacknowledged needs Isolated when men withdrew Self-inflicted loneliness to avoid questioning from others

Humour Carrying on as 'normal' Positive attitude Managing Change Acceptance Support from family & Information friends

Stivating ongo-Redefining sex Embracing relational intimacy Open to using sexual aids Reassurance Lack of sexual desire Unbalanced initiation of sex Threatened masculinity Decreased self-esteem Negative perceptions of using sexual aids Fear of losing partner hreatened Insecurities over sense or self marriage

Miscommunication

Differences in information seeking

Difficulties in expressing physical intimacy

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You

Shielding others outside of the relational dyad

Valuing each day Spending more time together Strengthened relationship Embarking on new adventures Jahre o Co

New perspectives



Conclusions

PCa presents many challenges for both the individual members of the couple and their relationship. Healthcare services should recognise: 1) that individual members of the couple may have different needs, 2) the importance of employing a couple focussed approach when highlighting support services.

More studies are needed that include larger samples of participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds and same-sex couples.

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