

Advancements in prostate cancer research provide hope for finding a cure and lead to the discovery of new treatments to minimize the impact of a man's prostate cancer and maximize his quality of life. This regular *Hot SHEET* supplement includes some of the latest research from the Prostate Cancer Foundation ([www.pcf.org](http://www.pcf.org)).

The PCF is the world's leading philanthropic organization funding and accelerating prostate cancer research. Founded in 1993, the PCF has raised more than \$745 million and provided funding to more than 2,000 research programs at nearly 200 cancer centers and universities.

### **Sleep, Sex, and Prostate Cancer: What's the Connection?**

Sleep and sex are two very important and personal concerns that many people struggle with at times. But if you have prostate cancer, the challenges can be even greater. Treatment with surgery, radiation, or hormone therapy can affect sexual function and desire. Urinary issues after treatment and worry about cancer recurrence can affect sleep ... the list goes on. But how exactly are these problems related in prostate cancer, and how can doctors use this connection to better help their patients? A team of researchers in New Zealand and Canada aimed to find out more about the link between sleep problems and sexual problems in prostate cancer patients. They sent an anonymous survey to patients with prostate cancer around the globe.

The final study results have been published in the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0092623X.2020.1848947>). The majority of patients (59%) had at least mild insomnia, and many (nearly 70%) were bothered by sexual problems. While most patients reported having a sex drive and being able to get an erection, only about 20% were able to have an orgasm. The main finding of the study is that orgasmic difficulty and insomnia are not only common, they are also statistically related – having one predicts that a person may have the other. This suggests that when men seek help for sexual problems, clinicians should ask about insomnia, as poor sleep may be contributing to problems with orgasm. Furthermore, treatments for insomnia – such as cognitive behavioral therapy or increased physical activity – may improve sexual functioning. Conversely, when patients present with sleep problems, providers should proactively ask about problems with orgasm – potentially identifying another way to help improve the patient's quality of life.

Ultimately, this is good news for patients with prostate cancer: identifying and treating problems in one area may boost functioning in the other. Better sleep and better sex can improve survivorship both during and after prostate cancer treatment. Don't hesitate to tell your doctor about symptoms or side effects you may be experiencing, even if you're not sure whether it's related to treatment.

***For more information visit [www.pcf.org](http://www.pcf.org), email [info@pcf.org](mailto:info@pcf.org), or call 1-800-757-2873.***