Cancer in Men

The most commonly diagnosed cancers in men are lung cancer, prostate cancer, and colorectal cancer.\(^2\) When diagnosed early the survival rate for all three cancers dramatically increases, but when diagnosed at an advanced stage, survivorship decreases significantly.

Data tells us that persons from medically vulnerable populations are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced stage cancer and may have been treated more effectively or cured if diagnosed earlier.\(^1\)

Cancer deaths can be reduced and prevented through screening, early diagnosis and treatment. Following recommended lung, prostate, and colorectal cancer screening guidelines increases the likelihood that cancer is found early when treatment works best. Early diagnosis also can reduces the total amount of out-of-pocket costs associated for extended treatment.\(^4\)
Multiple Factors Affect Men's Access to Care

Unemployment: During periods of unemployment, men reduce their number of routine medical checkups. Moreover, when state-level unemployment rates rise by 1%, preventive care services subsequently drop by 16%.6

Transportation: Rural residents may delay seeing a healthcare provider because of challenges accessing consistent, reliable transportation. Some studies reveal that longer travel distances to obtain outpatient care results in fewer primary care visits.8 Transportation barriers also delay urgent care visits which may lead to a decline in survivorship and effective treatment.

Additionally, financial barriers to healthcare may be particularly problematic for cancer survivors because of their risk for recurrence, second cancers, late effects experienced from treatment, and non-cancer related comorbidities.7

Survivorship and the Importance of Provider Engagement

Engaging in ongoing open and honest patient-provider communication may help improve health outcomes.7 Furthermore, numerous studies of cancer screening utilization show that physician recommendations can have a strong and positive impact on patients’ care. Health research in neighborhoods has shown social factors are associated with the health outcomes cancer patients experience across the cancer control continuum.9 Increasing access to culturally-sensitive patient navigation and care coordination may impact health disparities.11

References

Additional Resources
- Stanford University, Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdssp.html
- Stanford University, Thriving and Surviving Program, patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cts.html

Physicians increasing their efforts encouraging male populations to routinely participate in recommended cancer screening, treatment and risk-reduction behaviors may help alleviate and reduce men’s health disparities.