Treatment Decision Support for Men with Prostate Cancer and Their Caregivers

Principal investigator
Lee Green, PhD

Organization
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute

What was the research about?
Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in men. More than 3 million men in the United States have prostate cancer. There are many treatment options. But choosing the best treatment can be hard. In this study, the research team wanted to help men with prostate cancer and their caregivers make decisions about treatment. Caregivers in this study included the men's partners or spouses.

The team compared two groups of men and their caregivers. The first group received a mobile app called the Personalized Health Information Navigator. The app had information about the benefits and risks of all prostate cancer treatment options. It also helped men with prostate cancer make decisions based on what's important to them. The second group received paper booklets with similar information about treatment options. Men and their caregivers in both groups worked with a community support person during the study. The support person went over the information in the app or paper booklet.

What were the results?
The research team didn't find any differences between the effect of the app or the paper booklet on what people learned and how men and their caregivers felt about making treatment decisions. But in both groups, almost all the men and caregivers reported increased satisfaction with their treatment decisions. At the end of the study, caregivers from both groups knew more about prostate cancer than they did at the start.

Who was in the study?
The study included 179 patient and caregiver pairs. The pairs included men with prostate cancer who had not yet started treatment and their caregivers. Of the men in the study, 87 percent were white, and the average age was 63. Of the caregivers, 97 percent were women, 84 percent were white, and the average age was 59.

What did the research team do?
The research team assigned the patient and caregiver pairs by chance to receive either the app or the paper booklets. Men and caregivers in both groups went over the information with a community support person. The support person met with them every week for six weeks in person or by phone.

Men and their caregivers filled out surveys at the start of the study, right after the last meeting with the community support person, and at 6 and 12 months after the study started. The surveys asked men and caregivers

- If they were satisfied with the treatment choice they made
- What they knew about prostate cancer
- If they felt ready to make a treatment decision

A community health advocate and a prostate cancer survivor worked with the research team during the study.
What were the limits of the study?
Only 15 percent of all the men and caregivers involved in the study completed the final survey. The results might be different if more people filled out all the surveys. The research team invited people from many races to join the study, but most men who took part in the study were white. The results might be different for men of other races.

Future research could repeat this study and try to get more men and caregivers to complete the final survey.

Studies could also include men and caregivers of different races.

How can people use the results?
Having a community support person share information about the benefits and risks of prostate cancer treatment options—using either the app or the paper booklet—can help men and their caregivers make treatment decisions.

To learn more about this project, visit www.pcori.org/Green103.