

Finding Answers

Disparities Research for Change

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Interventions to Improve Decision Making and Reduce Racial and Ethnic Disparities in the Management of Prostate Cancer: A Systematic Review

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Background:

Ethnic minorities are disproportionately impacted by prostate cancer and are at risk of not receiving information they need to make informed decisions as patients. African American men have lower rates of early detection, are nearly 60 percent more likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer, and are more than twice as likely to die from it as white men. Physicians are less likely to discuss treatments with African American men compared to white men, and cultural barriers may prevent African American men from seeking emotional support regarding their prostate cancer. A well-coordinated system of care that provides high-quality interventions focused on culturally sensitive shared decision making may reduce these disparities. In addition, psychological interventions focusing on cancer-related stress and quality of life could help narrow the racial disparities in prostate cancer management.

Highlights of Findings:

- Twelve of 13 studies that used educational programs, print materials, videotapes/DVDs or the Web for enhancing informed decision making about prostate cancer screening showed statistically significant increases in knowledge. Educational programs showed the greatest percentage increase in knowledge across studies.
- Of the five cognitive-behavioral interventions reviewed, all improved quality of life among minority men being treated for localized prostate cancer by enhancing problem solving and coping skills.

Conclusions:

Despite the increased prevalence of high-risk prostate cancer in minority men, there are few articles in the last 25 years that focus on interventions to reduce related disparities. While screening for prostate cancer has fallen out of favor, the core management strategy for prostate cancer remains informed shared decision making. Appropriate interventions have consistently improved knowledge, increased self-efficacy, and raised quality of life.

Going forward, a much stronger evidence base for the use of such interventions to improve informed decision making across the clinical spectrum for prostate cancer is essential; especially necessary are more studies that address the role of behavioral interventions to support informed decision making in minority patients.

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