

cancer NEWSLINE

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>> Welcome to Cancer Newsline, your source for news on cancer research, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. I'm your host, Lisa Garvin. Dr. Campbell, what are the current statistics for testicular cancer? Is it staying about the same? Increasing?

>> The incidence of testicular cancer has been rising around the world. Albeit slowly, but in Western countries, in particular, there has been a constant rise at least since the 1940s. It is still unclear why that rise is occurring, but it has been noted.

>> And I know in the range of cancer, testicular cancer is maybe a better cancer to have. And it's typically a young man's disease, is it not?

>> That's correct. So the median age of diagnosis for all men is around 33. Many men are diagnosed in their age range of 20 to 35. Certainly, older men are diagnosed as well, more often, though, with seminoma and those can be in the fifth and sixth decade of life.

>> Testicular cancer is pretty easy to treat if it's caught in early stages. But how often do you get men diagnosed in an early treatable stage?

>> So I think that's a wonderful way to frame that question because I think that is actually inaccurate. I think testicular cancer is highly curable, but I think it is challenging to treat because I think many people have let their guard down in terms of treating it. What we see is that men certainly do well when they're treated by centers that have a lot of experience treating testicular cancer because there are important considerations in terms of overtreatment, undertreatment, having surgical expertise, in certain circumstances having radiation oncology expertise, having pathology expertise, and then medical oncology experience with all the different agents. It really the -- what is at risk is these are young men who are expected to live full lives, and so everything needs to be done properly to ensure the optimal outcome for these men.

>> So what symptoms should men be looking for?

>> So that's an interesting question. So most men will develop a painless lump in their testicle. But occasionally men can present with testicular pain. Men sometimes diagnose themselves, or sometimes it's their partner that diagnoses them. And so what we just like men to understand is what their own anatomy is, and then if they are noticing any differences in their testicles, they should go talk to their primary care physician and should be further evaluated.

>> Now, there's really no way to save a diseased testicle. I mean, usually the surgical treatment is just removing the testicle, is that correct?

>> That's correct. There are sometimes considerations of, especially when men have previously had testicular cancer and have had one of their testicles removed if they develop a new testicular cancer on the other side, sometimes considerations can be made about attempting to spare that testicle. Though, those are very uncommon circumstances, and so the common treatment is and should be performed is a radical orchiectomy.

>> This, of course, brings up fertility concerns because we're talking about a demographic that probably will want to bear children.

>> It's challenging because as couples are getting married at later and later time points, many men that are diagnosed with testicular cancer are not in committed relationships. And sometimes childbearing is not front and center in their minds. But this absolutely has to be considered, especially if patients are being considered for any abdominal surgery or being considered for chemotherapy. Fertility absolutely should be discussed, and men should be offered the opportunity to sperm bank.

>> Now, because they have testicular cancer, some men might think that their sperm are also diseased. That's not true, is it?

>> That's correct. What we do see is that the quality of sperm in men with testicular cancer can sometimes be less than the quality of men that do not have testicular cancer. But certainly, many men are able to give an adequate sperm sample that can reliably produce children in the future, and so they should certainly be offered sperm bank. But the quality of that sperm should be analyzed and men should be aware of that, especially if you have a situation where you do have some time prior to needing to start therapy.

>> So what would be your take-home advice to men who might worry about testicular cancer?

>> So I would really say two points. At this time, we have no screening for testicular cancer. But I would just know your body, and if something is changing, I definitely think notifying a physician makes sense. The second take-home point that I would just emphasize is that if you are diagnosed with testicular cancer, thinking about a second opinion at a center, such as MD Anderson or others that are high-volume centers, makes good sense, just to make sure that the game plan is well ironed out because these are situations where the treatment needs to be done correctly to get the best outcome possible.

>> Great, thank you very much. For more information, visit mdanderson.org. Thank you for listening to Cancer Newsline. Tune in for the next episode in our series.

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