

# Testosterone deficiency affects male cancer survivors' quality of life

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A new study has found that many male cancer survivors who develop testosterone deficiency after receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy have an impaired quality of life and reduced energy levels. Published early online in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society, the study suggests that young male cancer survivors with testosterone deficiency may benefit from testosterone replacement therapy.

Testosterone deficiency is a late side effect of [radiation therapy](#) and [chemotherapy](#) that occurs in approximately 15 percent of male cancer survivors. Investigators led by Professor Richard Ross, MD, FRCP, of the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom examined the relationship between [testosterone](#) levels, quality of life, self-esteem, fatigue and [sexual function](#) in 176 young male cancer survivors compared with 213 young men without cancer.

Young male cancer survivors said they experienced a marked impairment in quality of life, as well as reduced energy levels and quality of sexual function. These experiences were exacerbated in survivors with testosterone deficiency. Psychological distress was not elevated, self-esteem was normal, and sexual relationships were not impaired in male cancer survivors, however.

Professor Ross commented: "This is an important study demonstrating that low testosterone levels are common in male cancer survivors and associated with an impaired quality of life. However, the relationship

between testosterone levels and quality of life is complex and appears to depend on a threshold level rather than on a direct correlation. We now need interventional trials with testosterone to determine which young male cancer survivors will benefit from replacement therapy."

**More information:** "Quality of life, self-esteem, fatigue and sexual function in young men after cancer: a controlled cross-sectional study." Diana M. Greenfield, Stephen J. Walters, Robert E. Coleman, Barry W. Hancock, John A. Snowden, Stephen M. Shalet, Leonard R. DeRogatis, Richard J.M. Ross. *Cancer*; Published Online: February 22, 2010 ([DOI: 10.1002/cncr.24898](https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.24898)).

Provided by American Cancer Society

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