

# Male bowel cancer patients need more information about erectile dysfunction

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Male bowel cancer patients are very likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction (ED) after treatment and yet the majority are not receiving adequate information about the condition, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal today.

Bowel cancer affects over 38,000 people every year in the UK with around half of patients surviving for more than five years after treatment. This figure is set to increase, says the study. Men are more likely to develop bowel cancer and many will suffer from ED after their treatment, say the authors, led by Professor Sue Wilson at the University of Birmingham.

The research team carried out a series of in-depth interviews with 28 patients in the West Midlands who had been treated for bowel cancer.

Most of the respondents experienced ED as a result of their treatment. Yet many had been uninformed and unprepared for it. Almost none were receiving adequate, effective and [affordable care](#) for the condition.

The interview results also reveal evidence of [ageism](#) among [health professionals](#) – several respondents said their doctor or stoma nurse said ED would not matter to a patient of their age.

The authors conclude that information and treatment for ED are not routinely offered to male [bowel cancer](#) patients, as they are for prostate [cancer patients](#). They add that "the wide diversity of this patient group

calls for greater coordination of care and consistent strategies to tackle unmet needs."

In an accompanying editorial, Larissa Temple, a colorectal surgeon at the Sloan-Kettering Institute in New York, says the study would have benefited from examples of men who had been successfully treated for erectile dysfunction so that effective systems could be identified.

Temple adds that the role of the partner merits analysis and that "this is probably an important component of sexual rehabilitation for men with colorectal cancer."

Provided by British Medical Journal

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