

# Considerable surgeon-level variation in radical prostatectomy

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(HealthDay)—Considerable practice variation exists among surgeons at a high-volume academic center when selecting patients with prostate cancer to undergo radical prostatectomy, according to a study published in the March issue of *The Journal of Urology*.

Hiten D. Patel, M.D., M.P.H., from Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore, and colleagues examined practice variability among urologists practicing at a high-volume academic center. The authors examined the percent of patients at low risk treated with [radical prostatectomy](#) in a given year and assessed the proportion of variance due to surgeon and temporal effects.

The researchers found that the percent of low-risk patients treated with

prostatectomy increased 3.49 percent per year from 1991 to 2001 and decreased by 1.73 percent annually from 2001 to 2013. From 1991 to 2001, in a given year, greater surgeon experience correlated with a higher percent of patients at low risk treated with prostatectomy (0.46 percent per year of experience). High-volume surgeons operated on a greater percent of low-risk patients (3.54 percent). In a given year, surgeon level and temporal effects accounted for 24 and 70 percent, respectively, of the variance in the percent of [patients](#) at low risk treated with radical prostatectomy.

"In addition to patient decision support tools, publicly reporting individual practice patterns at the provider level could decrease the overtreatment of low-risk [prostate cancer](#)," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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