

Sexual functioning in long-term survivors of hematopoietic cell transplantation

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(Survey administered July 2014 – June 2015)

This study examined the sexual functioning and activity of hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) recipients and identified factors associated with sexual dysfunction. The study surveyed 1,742 participants, with an average of 11.9 years post-HCT and a mean age of 57.6. Women were more likely than men to report no sexual activity in the past year (39% versus 27%). Compared to the general population, these rates of sexual activity are lower. Lower education, low performance status, and older age were associated with low sexual activity. Additional gender-specific reasons for low sexual activity were predominantly physical issues for men and not having a partner for women.

Sexual dysfunction was also found to be prevalent among HCT survivors, regardless of the time since treatment. Among sexually active participants, 64% of women and 32% of men reported low sexual function, which is higher than the general population. The most frequently reported reasons for low sexual function were erectile dysfunction for men (38%) and vaginal dryness for women (63%). Low libido was another prevalent complaint. However, chronic GVHD was found to not affect sexual activity or function.

The results highlight the importance of considering gender-specific factors in addressing sexual health, recognizing the distinct challenges faced by men and women in the survivorship phase after HCT.