

Lay summary

Title: The psychological impact of being on a monitoring pathway for early stage prostate cancer: a UK-wide mixed methods study

Main findings:

- We compared the emotional well-being of men on active surveillance or watchful waiting, with men who had received treatment for prostate cancer.
- Most men on AS or WW had good wellbeing overall, which was similar to men who had received treatment.
- A minority of men on AS/WW were struggling psychologically with their diagnosis
- Health professionals should routinely ask men about their psychological health, and offer support to men who need it.

What was the question?

What is the psychological wellbeing of men with prostate cancer who are on active surveillance (AS) or watchful waiting (WW) and how does this compare with men who have received treatment?

How do men on AS or WW cope and manage their diagnosis?

What did we do?

The Life After Prostate Cancer Diagnosis study sent surveys to men with prostate cancer across the UK. The men had all been diagnosed with prostate cancer 18-42 months before. Some men were on active surveillance or watchful waiting, and others had received treatments such as surgery, radiotherapy or hormonal treatment.

The survey asked questions about any problems men were having. This included questions about whether they were experiencing anxiety or depression over the past month. It also included questions about men's emotional well-being.

Some men were interviewed via telephone about their experiences. We asked them to tell us in detail about their lives following diagnosis and how they had coped with any problems.

What did we find?

We compared men who were on either AS or WW (3,986 men) with those who had received active treatments. Men on AS or WW had good wellbeing overall, which was similar to men who had received treatment.

25 men on AS or WW were interviewed. Most men told us that they were coping well and their diagnosis didn't have much of an impact on their lives. A minority of men were struggling with their diagnosis. These men were less able to accept having a prostate cancer diagnosis. They also felt that

they had received less than adequate information and support by health professionals, and lacked confidence in their health care team.

What does this mean?

Most men who have been on AS/WW for a couple of years appear to be coping well psychologically.

This information could be provided to men when they are making treatment decisions.

Health professionals should routinely ask men about their psychological health during appointments, and offer support to men who need it.

Men should be given a clear 'plan of action' regarding their follow-up care and given information on potential future treatment options, should they want it.