Introduction: Literature has demonstrated sexual dysfunction is a common side effect of radiotherapy and androgen deprivation therapy to treat prostate cancer1,2. It includes erectile dysfunction, loss of libido, ejaculatory problems, penile shortening and changes in sensation3. Ten-year survival rates for prostate cancer have risen to around 84 per cent, meaning record numbers are now living with these side effects4. However research exploring the impact these problems have on men’s lives and relationships has been limited. This qualitative study explored factors linked to men’s experience of sexual dysfunction including self-perception, relationships and information/support needs.

Methods: A phenomenological study design was applied using semi-structured interviews carried out with men living 18-30 months after external beam radiotherapy treatment and androgen deprivation therapy. The interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was carried out.

Findings: All the men described experiencing sexual dysfunction following treatment. The main results were that men: (i) prioritised survival over sexual issues when making treatment decisions, (ii) had unmet information and support needs relating to sexual dysfunction and (iii) were distressed by the loss of sexual function and wanted to regain sexual function.

Conclusion: The responses highlighted the importance of providing information and support so men have a better understanding of sexual dysfunction and how it might impact on their lives. Men may not place a high priority on sexual side effects when making treatment decisions but providing them with information and support can help them to seek help later and prepare them for changes after treatment. Distress caused by the loss of sexual function may be reduced if men understand and anticipate post-treatment changes and the impact they can have on relationships and self-perception.