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AUA VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

MP02-20



Benefit finding and perceived severity of the disease in long-term prostate cancer survivors

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Objective

- Benefit finding (BF) refers to the perception of positive life change in the aftermath of an adverse life event
- BF has been associated with improved psychological outcomes
- Little is known about the prevalence and predictors of BF in (very-)long-term cancer survivors
- Aim was to survey BF in a large German PCa patient sample

Methods

- Questionnaires were mailed to 6,379 German long-term PCa survivors in 2018
- Assessment of BF using the 17 item-BF Scale (5 point, cut-off ≥ 3) and the perceived severity of the disease (single item, 4-point scale)
- Associations to sociodemographic, clinical and psychosocial characteristics
- Hierarchical regression analysis



Results

- N=4,252 → response rate: 66.7%
- Prevalence of BF after a mean follow-up of 15 years was 59.7%
- Items reflecting acceptance and adjustment were most endorsed
- Predictors of BF were a higher perceived severity, a younger age at diagnosis and a lower educational level ($p < 0.001$)
- Not predictive of BF was the severity of the clinical course of the PCa

Conclusion

- BF is still apparent 15 years after diagnosis of PCa
- Biographical factors and subjective appraisal seem to play a greater role than objective clinical factors in promoting positive life change
- Presence or lack of BF in PCa survivors should be addressed prudently by the treating urologist, along with assessment of psychological distress