

Vasectomy does not Increase Prostate Cancer Risk

Contributed by
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Concern about a possible link between vasectomy and prostate cancer first arose from reports published in the late 1980s. Following analysis of additional data from these studies, researchers concluded that vasectomy was probably not a risk factor for prostate cancer. However, in 1993, the findings of two large cohort studies appeared to reaffirm the link.

Most recently, researchers studying men in New Zealand, a country with the highest vasectomy rate in the world, found no association between vasectomy and prostate cancer, even 25 years or longer after the procedure had been performed (see Reuters Health story June 18, 2002).

In the current study, Dr. Martha K. Terris and colleagues, from Stanford University in California, compared the prostate cancer rates of 101 men with a vasectomy history with those of 202 matched control subjects. All of the men had been referred for prostate biopsy.

The prostate cancer rates in men with and without a vasectomy history were 45.5% and 48.5%, respectively ($p = \text{NS}$), the authors report in the October issue of *The Journal of Urology*.

Among men with prostate cancer, those with a vasectomy history had fewer poor prognostic indicators than those without this history. This finding supports the "theory that [men with a vasectomy history] are subject to more rigorous prostate cancer screening and are subsequently diagnosed with prostate cancer at an earlier age or stage," Dr. Terris and colleagues suggest.

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