

# Utilization of sexual health and pelvic floor physiotherapy services in the Vancouver Prostate Cancer Supportive Care Program

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## Background

The Vancouver Prostate Centre established the **Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program** in January 2013 to provide education and clinical services to men with prostate cancer and their partners.

The PCSC program is organized around 6 thematic modules that include sexual health (SH) and pelvic floor physiotherapy (PT) services. This modular structure provides maximum flexibility for the patient and his partner to participate in sessions or clinics according to need.

These services are available to patients without charge.

We examined the use of the SH and PT services in the PCSC program to better understand how the services are utilized.

## Methods

We gathered data from PCSC logs, clinic schedules, and patient records to assess utilization of SH and PT services.

### Sexual health services: eligible patients.

Patients and partners who are pre-treatment or within 6 months of surgery or radiation are offered a **group educational session** that focuses on sexual side effects of PC treatments and sexual rehabilitation options.

All patients/couples are eligible to meet for one-on-one **clinic visits** with the sexual health RN. Patients with challenging issues such as Peyronie's are referred to the sexual health MD.

Couples who have been evaluated in the SH clinic are invited to attend the quarterly Intimacy Workshops.

### Pelvic floor physiotherapy services: eligible patients

Patients who are about to undergo surgery or who have postoperative incontinence at any time after therapy are offered attendance at a **group educational session** that explains the anatomy and techniques for minimizing the impact of treatment on urinary function.

All patients are also eligible for up to 3 **clinic visits** with the PT. Patients needing further attention are referred outside the program.

## PCSC Modules

### Introduction to prostate cancer and primary treatment options for newly diagnosed patients

- Educational sessions delivered by a urologist, radiation oncologist and patient facilitator.
- Information about prostate cancer, Gleason score, risk categories, prognosis, treatment options.
- Patients may meet individually for 8 minutes with MDs to discuss biopsy report, risk category, and ask questions about options.
- Sessions limited to 8 patients and their partners/family members.

### Managing the impact of prostate cancer treatments on sexual function and intimacy

- Sexual health RN delivers educational sessions that focus on sexual side effects of PC treatments and sexual rehabilitation.
- Sexual health RN also available to meet couples for one-on-one clinic appointments.
- Workshops on intimacy are held quarterly. Limited to 12 couples who have been previously seen by sexual health RN.

### Pelvic floor physiotherapy

- Physiotherapist who is specialized in male pelvic floor physiotherapy delivers educational sessions that explain the anatomy and techniques for minimizing the impact of treatment on urinary function.
- Three one-on-one clinic appointments with a pelvic floor physiotherapist are available to those in need.

### Adapting to androgen deprivation therapy

- Educational sessions delivered by PhD researcher and/or patient volunteer cover ADT side effects and mitigation strategies.
- Attendees receive the 2014 book *"Androgen deprivation therapy: an essential guide for prostate cancer patients and their loved ones"*.

### Lifestyle management: nutrition and exercise

- Registered dietician from the BC Cancer Agency and a certified exercise physiologist deliver educational sessions on nutrition and physical activity respectively.
- One-on-one clinic appointments with an exercise physiologist are available to create an individualized exercise prescription.

### Psycho-oncology

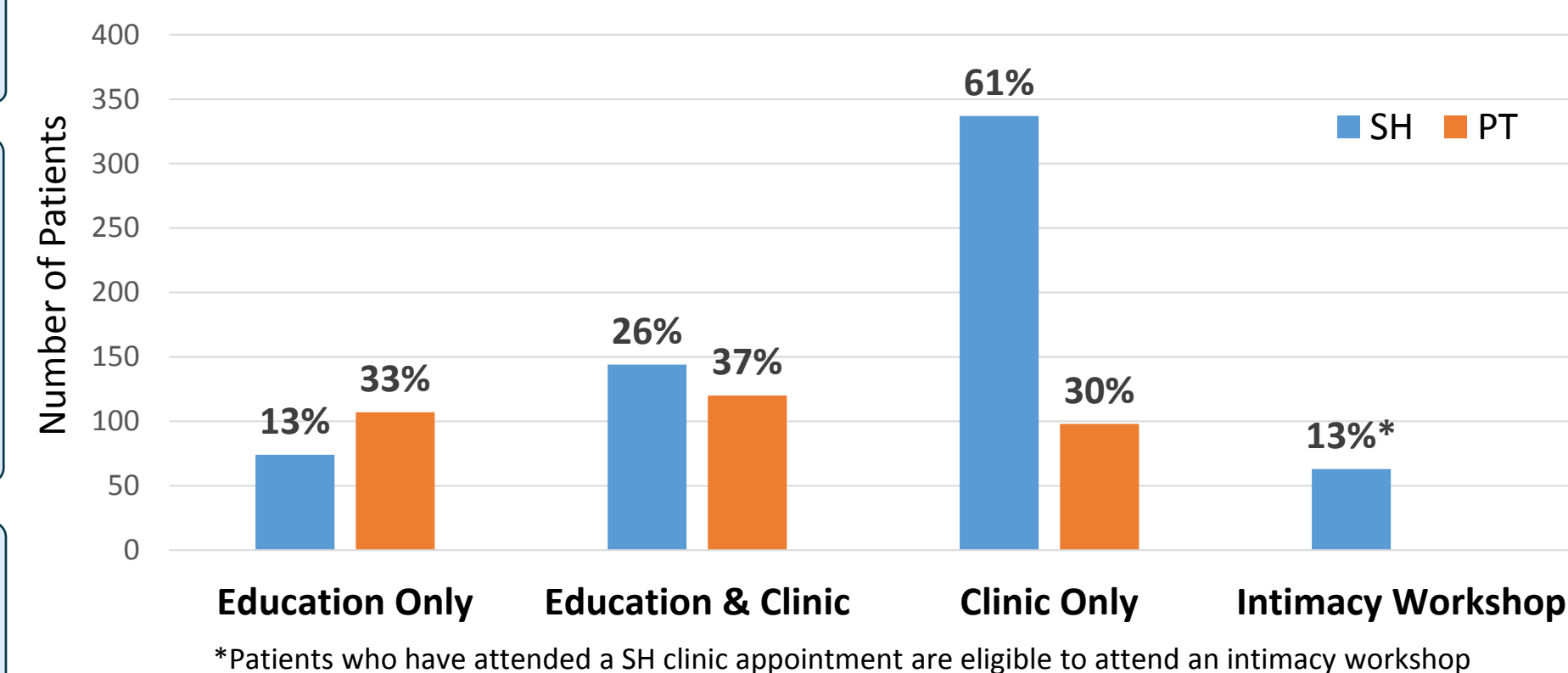
- One-on-one clinic appointments available for patients and/or partners to meet with a registered clinical counsellor.
- Group therapy workshops are planned with MD, PhD facilitator and clinical counsellors to support patients and their partners.

## Results

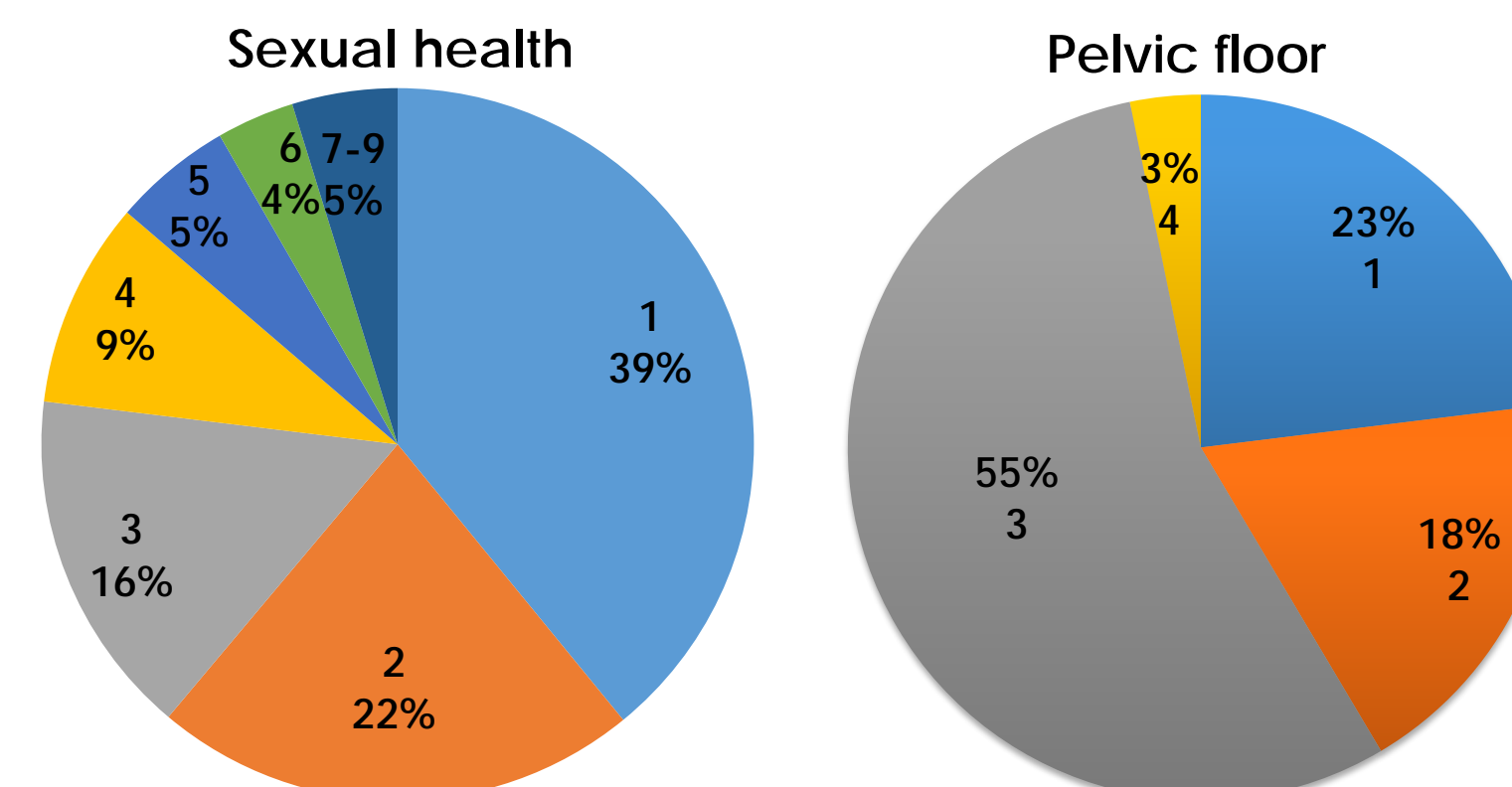
### Demographics

	PCSC n=1034	Sexual Health n=555 (54%)	Pelvic Floor n=325 (31%)
Median age, yrs (range)	66 (42-92)	65 (42-92)	66 (42-88)
Age < 65, %	42	48	45
Age ≥ 65, %	58	52	55
Surgery, %	90	90	98
Radiation, %	10	10	2
ADT %	15	1	0

### Utilization of different components of SH and PT services



### Percent of patients with one or more appointments



## Utilization of Sexual Health and Physiotherapy Services

- Of all 1034 men in the PCSC Program:
  - 663 patients (64%) have utilized the SH and/or PT services.
  - 216 patients (33%) participated in both SH and PT modules
  - 63% and 35% of men <age 65 used the SH and PT services respectively
  - 49% and 35% of men age ≥ 65 used the SH and PT services respectively
- Utilization of other modules:
  - Introduction to prostate cancer and treatment options, 24%
  - Managing side effects of ADT, 12%
  - Diet and exercise, 21%
  - Psycho-oncology, 5% (started May 2015)

## Summary & Conclusions

- In the PCSC Program:
  1. Sexual health and pelvic floor PT services are the most commonly utilized.
  2. Patients commonly seek both SH and PT services.
  3. A greater percentage of younger men than older men sought SH services.
  4. The same proportion of men in each age group utilize pelvic floor PT services.
- In British Columbia (BC), there is a lack of sexual health and male pelvic floor PT providers with specialized expertise in prostate cancer. It is likely that this observation is not isolated to BC or Canada.

## Future Directions

1. The PCSC Program has developed specialized courses to train both sexual health clinicians and physiotherapists about prostate cancer specific issues and therapeutic strategies.
2. PCSC Program has received additional funding to bring this multidisciplinary approach to 2 additional sites in BC.

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