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# Prostate Cancer and the Lives of Current Survivors: A Phenomenological Study.

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## Abstract

An interpretation of the experience of surviving prostate cancer as described by current survivors, this paper explores issues originating from diagnosis, treatment, and post-treatment stages with emphasis on the participant's current understanding. Participants (N=8) were interviewed individually and their accounts interpreted via hermeneutical phenomenological methods. Participants experienced a sense of progressing through 'pages' in the story of prostate cancer, reflecting past, present and future experiences. Within this process participants moved through several fluid phases of coping including shock, information and support seeking, frustration, acceptance and 'work', and progression. Phases were not discrete in their boundaries or necessarily experienced within a set sequence and could be revisited by participants. 'Work' included a process of 'crusading' whereby survivors sought out others to share their experiences and to encourage others to be tested. Conclusions from the study point toward further research in the area of prostate cancer and its impact on New Zealand men's lives, including possible Maori/Pakeha differences in interpretation, the input and role of caregivers/spouses, and the impact on carers' lives. Involvement from psychologists and other health professionals in planning tailored support services will also be discussed.

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