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Recent study assessing the realities of care

How many patients actually experience incontinence after prostate surgery has now been shown by a study that was published recently in the medical journal “Der Urologe.” In this study, a team of scientists assessed the medical records of all patients who received follow-up treatments in 2009 at the Klinik am Kurpark in Bad Wildungen following surgical removal of the prostate. Evaluated were 1750 patients with an average age of 65. Recorded were the age of the patient, PSA levels prior to surgery as well as the surgical procedure selected.

The result of the investigation cannot be any clearer: Three months after surgery, two-thirds of the patients were unable to hold their urine, despite the rehabilitation measures such as pelvic training. The degree of incontinence differed and ranged from urine leaks and wearing inserts and pessaries up to the permanent use of diapers. Conversely, only one third of the men left the rehab facility as continent. “The figures reflect the results we know from our daily practice,” says the Cologne urologist. When and if at all, affected men can overcome their incontinence, remains currently still unknown. Generally, we can assume that the longer the duration of

incontinence, the higher the probability that the patient cannot keep the urine even after 12 months. Noticeable was also that no matter what the operating method had been, there was no difference in how frequent urinary incontinence occurred. Even the propagated particularly safe robot-assisted surgery did not protect against the dreaded loss of urine.

"The high incidence of urinary incontinence as a result of the surgery is all the more serious considering that many men with prostate cancer still undergo surgery unnecessarily," says Dr. Neubauer. As recommended in the guidelines for men with prostate cancer at low risk, it might therefore often be sufficient to monitor the tumor closely (Active Surveillance). "Should surgical procedures become necessary, it will be important to shift the focus more on achieving the best cure rates with the most minimal side effects," so the urologist from Cologne. "It is therefore our duty," continues Neubauer, "to alert the patient before the therapy to more effective but less invasive treatments, such as brachytherapy (internal radiation)."

Literature:

¹Lent V.Schultheis H.M., Strauß L. et al.: Belastungsinkontinenz nach Prostatektomie in der Versorgungswirklichkeit; Urologe 2013 – 52:1104-1109