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Long Term and Latent Side Effects of Specific Cancer Types

Nana Gegechkori, MD, PhD¹, Lindsay Haines, MD², and Jenny J. Lin, MD, MPH¹

¹Division of General Internal Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY USA

²Department of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY USA

Synopsis

While many cancer survivors diagnosed with early-stage disease will outlive their cancer, they may continue to experience long-term and/or latent side effects due to cancer treatment. Many of these side effects are common and contribute to worse quality of life, morbidity and mortality for cancer survivors. We summarize the treatment side effects for several of the most prevalent cancers in the US.

Keywords

cancer survivorship; side effects; cancer treatment; symptom management

Introduction

There are currently over 15 million cancer survivors in the United States (US), and it is estimated that with improved treatment and early detection, the number of cancer survivors will increase to over 20 million by 2026.¹ Many of these survivors experience long-term and latent effects from cancer treatment. Long-term effects are side effects that arise during treatment and may persist over time, whereas latent effects may not appear until many years after treatment completion. This article summarizes the common long-term and latent treatment effects for several highly prevalent cancers.

Breast Cancer

Breast cancer (BC) is the most common non-skin cancer among women, and there are currently >3.5 million BC survivors in the US, representing more than 40% of female cancer survivors.¹ Most women are diagnosed at early-stage, and 5-year survival rate is 89%. Risks

Corresponding author: Jenny J. Lin, MD, MPH, Division of General Internal Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1087, New York, NY 10029, USA; (212) 824-7537, jenny.lin@mssm.edu.

Authors' contact information: One Gustave L. Levy Place, Box 1087, New York, NY 10029 Nana. gegechkori@mountsinai.org; Lindsay.haines@mountsinai.org; Jenny.lin@mssm.edu

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for developing long-term side effects after BC treatment are multifactorial and include age at the time of diagnosis, comorbidities and type, dose, and duration of treatment. Common side effects include lymphedema, cardiotoxicity, fatigue, neuropathy, cognitive dysfunction, endocrine disruptions, infertility, sexual health issues, body image concerns and mental health issues (Table 1).

Lymphedema

Lymphedema is a common complication that occurs in approximately 20% of women following surgery or radiation.² Compared with isolated radiation to the breast or chest wall, regional lymph node radiation is associated with an increased risk of lymphedema (22% vs. 3%).³ However, the severity of lymphedema varies, even among patients who receive similar treatment and can cause mild discomfort or pain to severe swelling and disfigurement and may increase risk for cellulitis.⁴ Treatment of lymphedema includes lymphatic drainage massage and use of compression sleeves.

Cardiotoxicity

Certain types of radiation and chemotherapy are associated with increased risk of developing cardiovascular complications, and some of these effects may not present until up to 20 years after cancer treatment.⁵ Cardiovascular complications can include hypertension, arrhythmias, coronary artery disease, heart failure, valvular disease, thromboembolic disorders, peripheral vascular disease, stroke, pulmonary hypertension, and pericardial complications.⁶ Anthracycline-induced dose-dependent cardiotoxicity has been observed in 9% of adult patients, with the highest incidence in the first year after chemotherapy completion.⁷ However, there is significant variability among patients in their susceptibility to anthracyclines, and a recent study found an estimated cumulative incidence of 26% for doxorubicin-related heart failure.⁸ Older age appears to be a significant risk factor for doxorubicin-related cardiotoxicity even with lower doses.⁹ Furthermore, cisplatin can also increase the risk of cardiovascular events even decades after treatment completion.¹⁰

Studies have also shown cardiotoxicity in up to 30% of BC survivors who have received trastuzumab (for HER2+ BC).^{11–15} Trastuzumab use in combination with doxorubicin leads to >7-fold increase risk of heart failure.¹⁶ Recent studies suggest that cardiotoxicity associated with trastuzumab progressively increases during the 3–5 years after treatment completion and can persist many years.^{12,17}

Radiation therapy (RT) is also associated with a variety of cardiovascular complications involving the pericardium, myocardium, valves, coronary arteries, and conduction system. Studies have identified regional perfusion defects in non-symptomatic BC survivors after RT, and the incidence and extent of perfusion defects are closely related to the volume of left ventricle included in the radiation field.¹⁸ Incidence of radiation-induced cardiotoxicity is estimated to be 10–30% 5 to 10 years post-treatment.¹⁹

Lastly, BC survivors may be at higher risk for thrombus formation. A misbalance between release of von Willebrand factor and production of thrombomodulin and adenosine diphosphatase may lead to increased platelet adherence and thrombus formation in irradiated

capillaries and arteries. Adjuvant hormonal therapy (HT) with tamoxifen can also increase risk of venous thromboembolism.²⁰

Fatigue

Fatigue is the most common symptom experienced by BC survivors, with prevalence rates ranging from 15–30% to 70–99%.^{21,22} Cancer-related fatigue may remain for years after treatment. Mechanisms for persistent fatigue among cancer survivors are not yet fully understood; several pathways, including chronic inflammation, autonomic imbalance, hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal-axis dysfunction, and mitochondrial damage, may cause disruption of normal neuronal function and result in fatigue.²³ Physical activity has been shown to improve fatigue symptoms.²⁴

Neuropathy

About 58% of survivors develop chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN).²⁵ Docetaxel-related peripheral neuropathy can persist up to 1–3 years after treatment completion with significant impairment of quality of life.²⁶ At least one oncology-related neurological complication such as neuropathic pain, CIPN, phantom breast pain/syndrome and cognitive decline was found among 48% BC survivors.²⁷

Cognitive Dysfunction

Impairment of cognitive function such as problems with concentration, executive function, and memory are reported in up to 35% BC survivors after treatment completion.²⁸ Cognitive impairment is a multifactorial phenomenon and associated with chemotherapy, HT, and anesthesia during surgery. Age, comorbidities and genetic factors are significantly related to risk for cognitive dysfunction.²⁹

Bone Health and Musculoskeletal Issues

Almost 80% of BC survivors experience some degree of bone loss.³⁰ Long-term HT negatively influences bone mineral density and quality.^{31,32} Treatment with aromatase inhibitors (AI) is associated with an almost 5-times higher fracture risk.³³ Current smoking, low body mass index, dementia, and corticosteroid use compound fracture risk associated with AIs.³⁴ Vertebral fractures unrelated to bone density have also been observed among BC survivors.³⁵

BC survivors may report musculoskeletal issues after surgery, such as decreased shoulder range of motion, rotator cuff disease, adhesive capsulitis, or axillary web syndrome.³⁶ AIs are also associated with increased incidence of arthralgias and myalgias.³⁷ Treatment includes physical therapy and use of non-steroidal inflammatory agents.

Premature Menopause and Infertility

Use of chemotherapeutic agents and adjuvant HT is linked with premature menopause and infertility.³⁸ Approximately 10% of BC survivors older than 45 experience chemotherapy-induced menopause, and tamoxifen use is associated with decreased fertility among premenopausal cancer survivors.^{39,40} Menopausal symptoms such vasomotor hot flashes are

observed among 50–70% of tamoxifen users. Symptoms are often more severe in younger patients due to the abrupt change in hormonal status.⁴¹

Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual issues such as decreased libido, arousal or lubrication, anorgasmia and dyspareunia are common complaints among BC survivors usually secondary to side effects from chemotherapy rather than RT or surgery.^{42–44} Problems with sexual desire may also be related to complications of RT such as cardiac and respiratory dysfunction or skin fibrosis leading to decrease sensitivity.⁴⁵

Body Image Concerns

Body image changes caused by loss of a breast, lymphedema, hair loss, skin changes from RT, weight gain, or early menopause affect 31–67% of BC survivors and appear to be most relevant for younger women.⁴⁶ Sexually active survivors are more vulnerable to decreased self-esteem, poorer mental health, and difficulties in relationships with a partner due to body appearance concerns.⁴²

Mental Health Issues

Depression and anxiety symptoms affect up to a quarter of BC survivors.⁴⁷ Compared with the general female population, BC survivors have a 60% increased risk of developing depression, anxiety and stress-related disorders within 10 years after cancer diagnosis.⁴⁸ Fear of cancer recurrence affects over half of BC survivors and may increase risk for developing mental health problems.⁴⁹ Screening survivors for distress, depression and/or anxiety is important to allow clinicians to treat and/or refer survivors appropriately.

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer diagnosed in the US and there are currently over 1.4 million CRC survivors.^{1,50} Due to screening efforts, many patients are diagnosed at early stage and the overall 5-year survival rate is 65% (and 90% for those diagnosed at early-stage). The most common treatment is surgical resection, with additional systemic chemotherapy and/or RT used either in the neoadjuvant or adjuvant setting for more advanced-stage CRC. Long-term and latent side effects for CRC survivors include bowel, bladder or sexual dysfunction, complications related to an ostomy, peripheral neuropathy, and mental health issues (Table 2).⁵¹

Bowel dysfunction

RT is linked to considerable bowel and anorectal side effects such as bowel frequency, urgency, fecal incontinence, radiation proctitis and perianal irritation. Approximately half of CRC survivors have chronic diarrhea, and RT remains an independent risk factor for long-term fecal incontinence.^{52–54} Patients who undergo lower anterior resection, as well as those undergoing sphincter-saving surgery, are also more likely to experience bowel dysfunction.⁵⁵ Severe bowel dysfunction may also be associated with urinary dysfunction and negatively affects sexual function or satisfaction with sex life.⁵⁶

Bladder dysfunction

Bladder dysfunction may present as various complaints. Damage to the sacral splanchnic nerves can cause detrusor denervation leading to decreased sensitivity of the bladder. Preoperative RT is also associated with increased risk of difficulty with urinary voiding.⁵⁶ Primary symptoms are difficulties with bladder emptying, overflow incontinence, and loss of bladder fullness sensation. Long-term incontinence and/or difficulty in bladder emptying occur in approximately one-third of CRC survivors, although others have reported urinary urgency and urge- or stress-related incontinence in up to three-quarters of CRC survivors.^{56,57}

Sexual dysfunction

Treatment-related sexual dysfunction has been reported in over a third of CRC survivors.^{57–60} Sacral plexus damage that can occur with surgery such as abdominal perineal resection (APR) is associated with erectile dysfunction and painful intercourse.^{53,61} Sexual dysfunction is reported in up to two-thirds of CRC survivors and may be due to lack of libido, erectile dysfunction or ejaculatory problems in men, vaginal dryness in women, and dyspareunia.⁵⁶ Risk factors leading to sexual dysfunction include autonomic nerve damage, presence of a stoma, anastomotic leak, or preoperative radiation, the presence of a stoma, and perioperative blood loss.⁵⁹

Ostomy/stoma-related complications

Approximately 10% of patients undergoing sphincter-saving resections have a temporary ileostomy.⁶² Complications associated with ostomies include peristomal skin irritation, leakage, odor, noise from the appliance, emotional and social distress. The presence of an ostomy may also impact CRC survivors' relationships and with sexual intimacy.⁶³

Neuropathy

CIPN is a potential long-term effect of oxaliplatin, which is often used to treat advanced CRC. Some studies report that about 77% cancer survivors experience oxaliplatin-induced grade 2 peripheral neuropathy.⁶⁴ Mostly large sensory nerves are affected leading to various types of paresthesias. Symptoms are partially reversible for the majority of patients, although less than 40% recover completely.⁶⁵

Cognitive dysfunction

Cognitive impairment has been found to range from from 36% to 52% among CRC survivors. The main cognitive domains affecting CRC survivors include processing speed, verbal memory, and attention/working memory.⁶⁶ Adjuvant chemotherapy may increase cognitive dysfunction in CRC survivors, although the majority will improve after treatment completion.⁶⁷

Other Treatment Effects

Up to a quarter of CRC survivors may experience chronic pain as a direct result of the cancer or treatment, thus dramatically influencing survivors' recovery and rehabilitation.⁶⁸ Radiotherapy may also increase fracture risk, particularly for pelvic fractures.⁶⁹ Lastly,

incidence of 5-fluorouracil (5FU)-associated cardiotoxicity can occur in up to 68% of CRC CRC survivors⁷⁰ and may include angina-like chest pain, myocardial infarction, arrhythmias, heart failure, cardiogenic shock and sudden death. A previous history of coronary artery disease and mediastinal radiotherapy are significantly associated with post-treatment cardiotoxicity.^{71–73}

Head and Neck Cancer

Head and neck cancer (HNC) survivors make up approximately 3% of the cancer survivor population.¹ Advances in ENT surgical techniques have improved survival in this population, and for those with early stage disease, it is estimated that about 80–90% will undergo full remission.⁷⁴ Many undergo multimodal treatments, including surgery, RT, and chemotherapy. Common side effects in HNC survivors include musculoskeletal and neuromuscular dysfunction, upper gastrointestinal (GI) dysfunction, lymphedema, sleep apnea, speech defects, oral health issues, as well as mental health issues (Table 3).

Musculoskeletal and Neuromuscular Dysfunction

Development of nerve palsies after head and neck surgery is common, particularly spinal accessory nerve palsy after radical neck dissection.⁷⁵ This nerve palsy causes shoulder motion dysfunction by reducing innervation to the upper and middle trapezius. One study found that upper limb dysfunction was reported to some extent in 77% of patients.⁷⁶ Those with spinal accessory nerve palsy can undergo physical therapy to strengthen the affected shoulder to improve or maintain range of motion in the joint.

Patients may experience cervical dystonia when the cervical plexus and nerve roots are damaged during surgery or when progressive fibrosis to the nerve roots and plexus occur after radiation. Cervical dystonia tends to affect the sternocleidomastoid, scalene, and trapezius muscles and is characterized by repetitive flexion and rotation of the neck and elevation of the shoulder. The cervical dystonia found in HNC survivors is often progressive but is more responsive to treatment options aimed at strengthening and stabilizing the cervical musculature. Treatment for cervical dystonia includes neuromuscular and proprioceptive retraining, myofascial release, and restoration of ROM with physical therapy. Medications such as pregabalin, gabapentin, and duloxetine have also been found to help with neuropathic pain and spasm.⁷⁷ While botulinum toxin (botox) has been approved by the FDA for treatment of cervical dystonia, there is little evidence demonstrating the efficacy of botox in patients with radiation or surgically induced cervical dystonia. Small studies, however, have demonstrated that botox can be efficacious in alleviating both spasms and neuropathic pain in this population.^{78–80}

Trismus—limited jaw range of motion—is common in HNC survivors and results in difficulty with eating, speaking and oral hygiene. Trismus is seen in 28% of patients one-year post treatment with highest rates after 6 months of treatment.⁸¹ Physical therapy can be helpful but may be inadequate. Studies of HNC survivors who underwent RT and subsequently developed trismus found that a jaw motion appliance may slow progression of trismus.⁸² Pregabalin, gabapentin, and duloxetine are also helpful in treating spasms and pain associated with trismus. Pentoxifylline may improve jaw opening, and botox may reduce

pain but does not have an effect on jaw opening.^{83,84} A combination of therapies should be recommended to patients with trismus to attempt to maximize quality of life.

Upper Gastrointestinal Symptoms

Upper GI side effects, particularly dysphagia, are especially common in those who have undergone RT, affects almost 50% of HNC survivors treated for locoregionally advanced-stage disease and 7% subsequently develop esophageal or pharyngeal strictures.^{85,86} In extreme cases, dysphagia can lead to chronic aspiration and recurrent infections. While dysphagia cannot be completely reversed, swallowing exercises and biofeedback can help reduce dysphagia, while esophageal dilation can help alleviate stricture. Those with chronic dysphagia, aspiration episodes, post-prandial cough, weight loss, or recurrent pneumonia should be referred to a speech pathologist for swallowing assessments. Sudden onset dysphagia should be evaluated for new or recurrent disease.

Lymphedema

Lymphedema is a common late effect of both surgery and radiation therapy, affecting up to three-quarters of survivors.⁸⁷ Lymphedema can cause decreased neck range of motion, hearing loss, decreased quality of life, while the cosmetic changes associated with lymphedema can also cause social anxiety and depression. Manual lymphatic drainage and compression garments are the standard of care for treatment.

Sleep Apnea

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a common among HNC survivors undergoing radiation and chemotherapy.⁸⁸ Both can cause tongue and laryngeal swelling that persists for years, and restricted neck motion from radiation can compromise airway positioning. Surgical reconstruction may also cause airway obstruction. OSA can lead to pulmonary hypertension, arrhythmias, and heart failure. Fatigue associated with OSA can worsen quality of life. Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) at night, behavioral therapy, weight loss may improve symptoms.

Speech Alterations

Speech can be affected to varying degrees in HNC survivors, ranging from hoarseness to dysarthria.⁸⁹ Speech therapy can help improve speech. Those who have undergone a tracheostomy can use a valved voice prosthesis to improve intelligibility of speech. Those with palatal issues can have prosthetic obturators created to help improve speech.⁹⁰

Oral Health Issues

Oral health can often be compromised in HNC survivors. Disruption of salivary flow as well as damage to teeth from chemotherapy or emesis can put HNC survivors at increased risk of dental caries.⁹¹ Furthermore, radiotherapy can remove the gingival attachment from teeth and increase risk of periodontitis, thus leading to tooth loss or infection. Severe cases of gingival attachment loss have resulted in osteonecrosis.⁹² Xerostomia is also common due to loss of salivary gland tissue. Conscientious oral care and regular visits to the dentist can help prevent these symptoms.

Mental Health Issues

Like all cancer survivors, HNC survivors are prone to increased risk of depression and anxiety. Unlike other cancer survivors, many HNC patients undergo surgical procedures that often dramatically change facial structure and appearance. These changes can cause avoidance of social situations, embarrassment, and shame, and providers should recognize and refer appropriate patients for counseling.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer (LC) is the second most common cancer diagnosed in the US, although LC survivors only comprise 3% of cancer survivors as a result of most patients being diagnosed at more advanced stage.¹ However, with increased screening for high-risk individuals, it is anticipated that there may be a stage shift so that the majority of LC will be diagnosed at early stage.⁹³ The 5-year survival rate for those diagnosed at early-stage is 55%. Most early-stage LC is treated with surgical resection and adjuvant chemotherapy +/- RT. Common long-term treatment side effects include impaired pulmonary function, fatigue, neuropathy, and mental health issues (Table 4).

Impaired Pulmonary Function

Due to risk factors for LC such as heavy tobacco use, many LC survivors have decreased pulmonary function prior to diagnosis, and both surgery and RT can further reduce pulmonary function.⁹⁴ Approximately half of LC survivors have persistent dyspnea years after treatment completion.^{95,96} In addition, many survivors report a chronic cough that may affect eating, sleeping and speaking.⁹⁷ Cough may also result from radiation pneumonitis in those who received RT.

Fatigue

Fatigue is the most common side effect in LC survivors, affecting over 50% and up to 90% of survivors.^{98,99} Mood disorders, comorbidities, poor functional status, sleep disturbances and decreased pulmonary function increase risk for fatigue. Moreover, fatigue symptoms often cluster with mood and sleep disorders, suggesting a possible common inflammatory pathway. While fatigue is hard to treat, physical activity and exercise may improve symptoms.¹⁰⁰⁻¹⁰² In addition, targeted therapy such as angiogenesis inhibitors or drugs for LC with *ALK* gene mutations may also cause fatigue but it is not yet known how long fatigue symptoms may persist given the very recent use of these drugs.

Neuropathy

Treatment with platinum-based chemotherapy agents may cause CIPN in up to 50% of LC survivors and may persist for years after treatment completion.^{103,104} Treatment is variably effective and may include tricyclic antidepressants, anticonvulsants (such as gabapentin or pregabalin) or topical agents. One study also found that duloxetine was effective in reducing pain in survivors with CIPN.¹⁰⁵

Mental Health Issues

Similar to other cancer survivors, LC survivors also experience higher rates of depression and anxiety, and both are associated with higher cancer-specific and overall mortality.^{106–108} However, LC survivors also often cope with the stigma of LC being a “self-inflicted” illness due to its strong association with tobacco use; non-smokers in particular describe feeling stigmatized by LC diagnosis.^{109–111}

Other Treatment Effects

Targeted immunotherapy with angiogenesis inhibitors may cause hypertension, increased risk for bleeding or poor wound healing due to their effect on vascular growth. In addition, epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) inhibitors are often associated with an acneiform dermatitis that can range from a mild rash and itching to very severe dermatitis affecting most of the body, severe pruritis and increased risk for skin infections.^{112,113}

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer among men in the US, and prostate cancer survivors comprise over 20% of all cancer survivors.¹ The 5-year survival rate is >95%, and most prostate cancer survivors die from non-cancer causes. The most common modes of treatment for patients with prostate cancer include surgery, RT, hormone therapy, and active surveillance, and each is associated with its own set of side effects. The most common side effects include urinary, sexual, or bowel dysfunction, and mental health issues (Table 5).

Urinary Dysfunction

After surgery, many survivors experience stress incontinence. Urinary function for these patients generally improves gradually after surgery and reaches stability after one year.^{114–116} RT can lead to mucositis and edema in the urinary tract which over time can lead to stricture, overactive bladder, fistulas, hematuria, decreased bladder capacity, weak urinary stream, and urinary retention. For those with post-prostatectomy incontinence—a form of stress incontinence—pelvic floor exercises may be beneficial but evidence of their efficacy is inconclusive.^{117,118} Male urethral slings or artificial urinary sphincters can reduce or eliminate stress incontinence in this population.¹¹⁹ For those with urge incontinence, often in post-radiation patients, anti-cholinergic medications can be helpful. However, given that many prostate cancer survivors are older, these medications should be given with caution. For those with difficulty emptying their bladder, alpha-blockers can be tried. In those with post-radiation cystitis, hyperbaric oxygen therapy can be useful.¹²⁰

Bowel Dysfunction

Bowel dysfunction is also common, especially in patients who underwent radiation. Acute side effects of RT include bowel irregularity, cramping, and diarrhea. Over time, patients may experience rectal bleeding due to thinning of the rectal mucosa. In severe cases, patients may develop ulcers and rectourethral fistulas. Patients may also develop sphincter dysfunction causing rectal urgency and frequency. Dietary changes and hyperbaric oxygen

therapy have been found to help these symptoms.¹²⁰ Fortunately, advances in radiation targeting and therapy have decreased the incidence of these issues.

Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual dysfunction affects nearly all prostate cancer survivors at some point. Erectile dysfunction (ED) is common; those at highest risk for ED are older men and those with preexisting ED. Early penile rehabilitation after prostate cancer surgery can improve sexual function.¹²¹ Penile rehabilitation includes early phosphodiesterase-5 (PDE-5) inhibitor administration to help preserve smooth muscle and improve erectile function through increased tissue perfusion. For those who fail or have contraindications to PDE-5 inhibitors, intraurethral prostaglandin, vacuum erection devices, and penile prosthesis can be tried. Furthermore, while many patients may initially have ED after surgery, some do recover up to 2–4 years after surgery.¹²² In contrast to post-prostatectomy patients who often have rapid onset of ED with varying degrees of improvement over time, those undergoing RT often experience a delayed onset of symptoms, usually 6–36 months after treatment.¹²³ Those receiving androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) also suffer from ED, usually due to decreased libido.

While there are many physiological causes for sexual dysfunction after treatment, psychosocial issues also impact sexual functioning. Many prostate cancer survivors suffer from anxiety and depression after treatment, and these issues may affect sexual drive and function.^{124–126} Furthermore, partners of prostate cancer survivors also have high rates of anxiety and depression which may compound a couple's difficulty achieving intimacy after treatment.^{127–129} Concerns over physical changes such as lack of or changes in ejaculate, shortened penis size, or loss of male secondary sexual characteristics that can occur with certain treatments may also limit a patient's ability to seek sexual intimacy and may create a psychological barrier to attaining their prior sex life.

Tools such as the Sexual Health Inventory for Men can help clinicians screen for difficulties with sexual intimacy to determine who to refer for counseling as well as to initiate pharmacologic interventions. Besides ED itself, other side effects of treatment such as urinary and bowel dysfunction can interfere with sexual intimacy as well.

Mental Health Issues

Like other survivors, prostate cancer survivors experience greater levels of anxiety and depression. Up to 30% of those with prostate cancer experience general distress, 25% have increased anxiety, and 10% have clinically significant depression.^{124–126} While the bulk of studies assessing mental health examined patients within the first year after treatment, over time the level of distress that prostate cancer survivors experience appears to decrease.¹³⁰ Routine distress screening is effective and can also help relieve the distress felt by these survivors.¹³¹

Other Treatment Effects

ADT can increase risk for obesity and diabetes due to its effect on fat and lipid metabolism, as well as possibly increase risk for cardiovascular disease.^{132–134} In addition, ADT use has

been associated with increased bone loss and higher incidence of osteoporosis and fractures. Men who have received ADT also may experience vasomotor symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats. Periodic screening for diabetes, lipid profiles and bone density are recommended for prostate cancer survivors who have received ADT.

A summary of treatment side effects associated with each of the cancers described is presented in Table 6.

Future Considerations/Summary

With improved screening and treatment, the number of cancer survivors in the US is expected increase by another 5 million in the next decade. While many cancer survivors, especially those diagnosed at early-stage, will outlive their cancer and die of other comorbidities, their cancer treatments may lead to long-term and/or latent side effects. These side effects often have significant impact on survivors' quality of life, morbidity and overall mortality. Clinicians—both in primary care and oncology—should be aware of these issues so that they can routinely and actively screen for and treat these side effects in cancer survivors.

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Key Points

1. Most cancer survivors experience some long-term or latent side effects as a result of cancer treatment.
2. Fatigue and mental health issues are very common long-term side effects associated with treatment for many different cancers.
3. Clinicians should be aware of these long-term and latent side effects so that they can routinely screen for and treat cancer survivors appropriately.

Table 1

Long term and latent effects of breast cancer treatment

Side effect	Treatment type				
	Chemo	HT	IM	RT	Surgery
General					
Fatigue	X			X	
Pain				X	X
Weakness	X			X	X
Cardiac					
Cardiomyopathy	X		X	X	
Thromboembolism		X			
Endocrine					
Bone loss		X			
Infertility	X	X			
Premature menopause	X	X			
Vasomotor symptoms	X	X			
Musculoskeletal					
Arthralgia/myalgias		X		X	X
Lymphedema					X
Rotator cuff disease					X
Neurologic					
Cognitive dysfunction	X	X			X
Neuropathy	X				
Psychosocial (anxiety, body image concerns, depression)		X		X	X
Pulmonary (pneumonitis)				X	
Sexual dysfunction (decreased libido, vaginal dryness, dyspareunia)	X				

Chemo: chemotherapy; HT: hormonal therapy; IM: immune modulators (trastuzumab); RT: radiation therapy

Table 2

Long term and latent effects of colorectal cancer treatment

Side effect	Treatment type		
	Chemotherapy	Radiation	Surgery
General			
Fatigue	X	X	
Pain		X	X
Weakness			
Cardiotoxicity	X		
Gastrointestinal			
Bowel urgency		X	X
Chronic diarrhea		X	X
Fecal incontinence		X	
Ostomy complications			X
Genitourinary (difficulty voiding or incontinence)		X	X
Neurologic			
Cognitive dysfunction	X		
Neuropathy	X		
Psychosocial (anxiety, distress, depression)		X	X
Sexual dysfunction (decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, vaginal dryness, dyspareunia)		X	X

Table 3

Long term and latent effects of head and neck cancer treatment

Side effect	Treatment type		
	Chemotherapy	Radiation	Surgery
General			
Fatigue	X	X	
Pain			X
Weakness	X	X	
Musculoskeletal			
Cervical dystonia		X	X
Lymphedema		X	X
Shoulder dysfunction		X	X
Neurologic			
Cognitive dysfunction	X		
Cervical radiculopathy	X	X	X
Neuropathy	X		X
Oropharyngeal			
Dental caries		X	
Dysarthria		X	X
Dysphagia/esophageal stricture		X	X
Reflux disease		X	
Taste disturbance		X	
Trismus		X	X
Xerostomia		X	X
Psychosocial (anxiety, distress, depression)	X	X	X
Pulmonary (pulmonary fibrosis)	X	X	

Table 4

Long term and latent effects of lung cancer treatment

Side effect	Treatment type			
	Chemo	RT	Surgery	Targeted
General				
Fatigue	X	X		X
Pain			X	
Weakness	X	X		
Dermatitis				X
Hypertension				X
Neurologic				
Cognitive dysfunction	X			
Neuropathy	X			
Psychosocial (anxiety, distress, depression)	X	X	X	
Pulmonary				
Chronic cough		X		
Dyspnea		X	X	
Pneumonitis		X		

Chemo: chemotherapy; RT: radiation therapy

Targeted refers to immunotherapy drugs that target specific gene mutations (e.g. *ALK*), angiogenesis inhibitors or EGFR inhibitors

Table 5

Long term and latent effects of prostate cancer treatment

Side effect	Treatment type		
	Hormonal (ADT)	Radiation	Surgery
General			
Fatigue	X	X	
Pain		X	X
Weakness	X	X	X
Bowel dysfunction			
Fecal urgency/incontinence		X	
Proctitis		X	
Cardiovascular disease	X		
Endocrine			
Bone loss	X		
Metabolic syndrome/diabetes	X		
Vasomotor symptoms	X		
Weight gain/obesity	X		
Psychosocial (anxiety, body image concerns, depression)	X	X	X
Sexual dysfunction (decreased libido, erectile dysfunction)	X	X	X
Urinary dysfunction			
Incontinence		X	X
Urethral stricture		X	X
Urgency/frequency		X	X

ADT: androgen deprivation therapy

Table 6

Common long-term and latent treatment side effects by cancer type

Side effect	Cancer Type				
	Breast	CRC	HNC	Lung	Prostate
Bone loss	X				X
Bowel dysfunction		X			X
Cardiovascular disease	X	X		X	X
Cognitive dysfunction	X	X		X	
Dermatitis				X	
Dysphagia/GERD			X		
Endocrine disruptions (infertility, metabolic syndrome, vasomotor symptoms)	X				X
Fatigue	X	X	X	X	X
Lymphedema	X		X		
Mental health issues (anxiety, depression, body image concerns)	X	X	X	X	X
Musculoskeletal pain	X		X		
Neuropathy		X	X	X	
Oral health issues			X		
Pulmonary dysfunction	X		X	X	
Sexual dysfunction	X	X			X
Sleep apnea			X		
Urinary dysfunction		X			X

CRC: colorectal; HNC: head and neck