

Homogenous Sample Creates Limitations Concerns

I read your article titled “The Lived Experience of Men Diagnosed With Prostate Cancer” (Krumwiede & Krumwiede, 2012) with great interest. Your article was timely and much needed. As a current doctoral student who also has an interest in this topic, I am exploring the lived experience of gay men with prostate cancer.

I noticed that you did not include any limitations in this study. You had a homogenous group of men for the most part. Only one participant was single (divorced). This sample had 9 of 10 participants’ status postprostatectomy. So, this is the lived experience of married heterosexual men with prostate cancer status postprostatectomy.

I have read many studies on the experience and quality of life of men with prostate cancer, but all seem to be heteronormative with married men. When studies do not point out their limitations, wrong conclusions can be generalized by the untrained reader. Can your conclusions be generalized to single men? What about gay men, partnered or single?

Nurses need information that can assist them in caring for all patients. Your article was well written, and added to the knowledge needed. More inclusive research by nurses is needed.

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Krumwiede, K.A., & Krumwiede, N. (2012). The lived experience of men diagnosed with prostate cancer [Online exclusive]. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 39, E443–E450. doi:10.1188/12.ONFE443-E450

The Author Responds

We want to thank you for taking the time to read our article and your kind words of encouragement. Like you, we are very passionate about improving the profession’s understanding of the prostate cancer experience. We are encouraged that you are exploring the lived experience of gay men with prostate cancer as we begin to explore the lived experience for the spouses of heterosexual men.

As all researchers realize, no research study is conducted without experiencing limitations. While writing the manuscript, a section of study limitations was included until the final revision. Both qualitative and quantitative research must adhere to the same author guidelines during the manuscript preparation. Thus, we intentionally chose to eliminate the sections on study assumptions, limitations, and future research to use the word space to honor the participants’ stories. This is one of the challenges that authors of qualitative research must address.

We are relieved that a discerning reader like you was able to read the description of the study participants and understand this study resulted in talking to essentially married heterosexual men. As 9 out of 10 participants were married, none were gay men, and all were middle class Caucasian males from a rural setting, we would be remiss to generalize the findings to other populations of men experiencing prostate cancer until their stories are heard.

We did not set out to be exclusive of any male population. This study also revealed how the use of the snowball technique did not facilitate a more inclusive set of participants. We totally support your call to action that more inclusive research by nurses is needed. We will await your article on the lived experience of gay men with prostate cancer, and please contact us if we can be of assistance. Thank you for keeping the dialogue continuing!

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