Testicular Cancer Awareness and Screening Practices:  
A Systematic Review

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Purpose/Objectives: To critically appraise empirical evidence gathered from studies that  
(a) explored men’s knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward testicular cancer (TC)  
and its screening; (b) addressed their testicular self-examination (TSE) practice; and/or  
(c) highlighted barriers and facilitators to this practice.

Data Sources: MEDLINE®, CINAHL®, and EMBASE®.

Data Synthesis: 25 articles met the inclusion criteria. Knowledge deficits regarding TC  
and its screening were seen. Participants who did not perform TSE often were uninformed  
about this practice. The majority of men perceived TC education as a positive step toward  
raising awareness about this malignancy.

Conclusions: Very few men were informed about TC and TSE. Future studies should include  
valid and reliable tools to assess TC knowledge and screening, address the means through  
which TC knowledge is delivered, explore the individual’s experience with TC screening,  
and focus on TC awareness and screening among minority groups.

Implications for Nursing: Although regular screening for TC is a controversial issue, nurses  
should encourage young men to seek medical attention in the event of discovering scrotal  
abnormalities.

Testicular cancer (TC) is a rare malignancy that constitutes 0.5% of all new  
cancer cases and 0.1% of all cancer deaths in the United States. About  
1 in every 263 men will develop TC in their lifetime and 8,430 men will be  
diagnosed with TC in 2015 (National Cancer Institute, 2014a). Men aged  
20–34 years are at the highest risk for TC, with a median age of 33 years  
at diagnosis. However, in the United States, TC has one of the highest cure rates,  
with a five-year survival rate of 95% (National Cancer Institute, 2014a).

TC screening in asymptomatic males continues to be a controversial issue be-  
cause of a lack of empirical evidence that supports or discourages the practice  
(Law, 2004; National Cancer Institute, 2014b). The U.S. Preventive Services Task  
Force ([USPSTF], 2011) issued a statement against TC screening among asymptom-  
atic males. This statement was based on a Cochrane review conducted by Illic and Misso (2011) in which no evidence was found regarding the beneficial  
effect of TC screening on mortality. In addition, it was suggested that TC screening  
may cause unnecessary anxiety and increase the likelihood of having false-  
positive findings that would consequently expose men to invasive diagnostic  
tests. However, key cancer organizations, such as the American Cancer Society  
([ACS], 2014c), recommend TC screening as a component of routine cancer-  
related physical examinations. In the United Kingdom, men are encouraged to be  
aware of the normal anatomy of their testes (Cancer Research UK, 2014) despite  
having no evidence to support weekly or monthly testicular self-examination  
(TSE). Similarly, the Irish Cancer Society (2014) offers infographic material to