Prostate Cancer Treatment Tied to Increased Cardiovascular Risks
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In recent years, because testosterone can help prostate tumors grow, doctors have started using androgen-deprivation therapy (ADT), a hormone-suppressing remedy, to treat men in the initial phase of prostate cancer. Now, findings published in the British Journal of Cancer suggest that giving men this common treatment at this point could increase their risk of heart failure, reports HealthDay.

For the assessment, researchers examined more than 7,600 men with early-stage prostate cancer to assess the safety and effectiveness of ADT. Scientists tracked the participants for 12 years after diagnosis between 1998 and 2008. In addition, they accounted for heart risk factors, including overweight or obesity, history of smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure or whether individuals required heart medications.

Results revealed that the prostate cancer patients without heart disease who received ADT exhibited an 81 percent higher risk for heart failure. Those with heart disease undergoing ADT showed a greater risk for heart rhythm problems, including a 44 percent increased chance of developing an irregular heartbeat. What’s more, these men were three times more likely to experience conduction disorder, a disruption of electrical impulses to the heart.

“The findings allow men with localized prostate cancer to consider the positive and negative effects of androgen-deprivation therapy and discuss it with their physicians,” said Reina Haque, PhD, MPH, a researcher with the Kaiser Permanente Southern California Department of Research & Evaluation and one of the study’s authors. “If they move forward with the therapy, patients should work with their physicians to adjust their lifestyle to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.”

As an added precaution, Haque recommended that physicians regularly monitor these patients for early signs of heart disease.

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