

Overview

Testicular cancer develops in the testicles (testes), the male reproductive glands. The testicles are located in the membranous pouch below the penis (scrotum) and are suspended from the body by the spermatic cord. They produce male reproductive cells (sperm) and testosterone. Testicular cancer is treated successfully in more than 95% of cases.

Anatomy

The testicles are primarily made up of a mass of seminiferous tubules in which sperm develop. The tubules are lined with Sertoli cells, which protect and supply nutrients to developing sperm. Sertoli cells also secrete the hormone inhibin, which is involved in the regulation of sperm production.

Leydig cells, located in tissue between the seminiferous tubules, secrete testosterone and androsterone. These hormones stimulate the development of male sex organs, beard growth, muscle mass, and deepening of the voice.

Incidence and Prevalence

Incidence of testicular cancer is rising. According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 7600 cases are diagnosed and about 400 men die of the disease each year in the United States. The disease is most prevalent in men between the ages of 18 and 32 and is approximately 5 times more common in Caucasians than African Americans. Germany, Scandinavia, and New Zealand have the highest incidence of testicular cancer and Asia and Africa have the lowest.