

ACCC RECOGNIZES TESTICULAR CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

April 13, 2023



On July 18, 2022, Sébastien Haller—a 28-year-old Ivorian footballer/soccer player—was **diagnosed** with testicular cancer. Haller had only completed his transfer to the Borussia Dortmund football club in the Bundesliga (the highest division of professional soccer in Germany) less than a month prior to being diagnosed and was sidelined indefinitely.

In an interview with *Times (UK)*, Haller **revealed** that he had some health concerns while on international duty with the Ivory Coast national football team in May 2022: “‘I started the national team [break] with this pain in my belly,’ he said. ‘I thought it was a stomach ache, three days of not digesting well, feeling like you have something in your stomach...I tried to play, I

trained. Then I had four days of flu symptoms: I was struggling to breathe, I couldn't finish training."

Haller's resistance to consult a medical professional with his health concern is a common trend among American men. In a [2022 survey](#) of 1,000 men in the United States ages 18 years and over, 75 percent reveal that they did not visit a doctor when they had symptoms of a specific illness. In [another survey](#), only 50 percent (of the total 1,174 adult men sampled) say they get regular checkups.

As a professional footballer, Haller is privy to the importance of routine physical exams and extensive medical evaluations in ways the average American male is not. Now, [Haller is advocating](#) for all men to get checked if they feel ill or have a health concern, especially in the case of testicular cancer. "We need to check. You cannot be ashamed," [he said](#). "We are not checking only for ourselves but also for our family and friends and those around us. It can save a lot of lives."

The Stats on Testicular Cancer

[Testicular cancer](#) is one of the most frequently diagnosed cancers in men 14 years to 44 years of age, and its treatments (surgery and adjuvant chemotherapy or radiotherapy) ensure a 5-years disease-free survival rate in about 95 percent of patients. Yet, like other cancers, it is imperative that the disease is diagnosed earlier rather than later. Thus, raising awareness of testicular cancer and its symptoms is critical, given [the lack](#) of standard or routine testing for the disease. And recognizing April as Testicular Cancer Awareness Month is a good opportunity to do so.

"Testicular Cancer Awareness Month is observed in April to encourage men to perform monthly testicular self-exams," [said](#) Kim Jones, founder and chief executive officer of the Testicular Cancer Awareness Foundation. "It is important to remove the stigma associated with testicular cancer and educate others about the importance of monthly self-exams and early detection." Although [testicular cancer](#) is uncommon, affecting only 1 man in 250 men, it is the most prevalent cancer in men between 14 years to 44 years

old. The average **age of diagnosis** is 33 years, but approximately 6 percent of testicular cancer cases occur in children and teenagers and 8 percent of cases occur in men 55 years and over.

Risk Factors of Testicular Cancer

The **U.S. and Europe see** the highest rate of testicular cancer in the world—this year, the U.S. will see approximately **9,910 new cases**. The **disease is** also most common among White men in the U.S., as they are four to five times more likely to be diagnosed than Black men and three times more likely than Asian men.

Population-based studies conducted in the late 1990s to early 2000s reveal that having an immediate family member with a history of testicular cancer dramatically increases one's risk of the disease, compared to the general male population; however, 90 percent of men who have been diagnosed with testicular cancer have a documented family history. Further, **cryptorchidism** (a condition when one or more testes has not moved to its proper position in the scrotum before birth) and **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection** increases one's risk of testicular cancer.

A Hopeful Outcome

On January 22, 2023, Haller finally made his professional debut with Borussia Dortmund and scored his **first goal** for the club on World Cancer Day (February 4). Speaking to the **league's website** following his debut goal, Haller said, "To score today was a great message to everyone who is fighting [cancer] today or will fight [cancer] later. It gives some hope, some courage... The days after will always be better."

He is right, the 5-year survival rate for testicular cancer gives newly diagnosed patients hope of beating the disease. While most patients with testicular cancer may not be scoring a goal in front of one the most **passionate fan bases** in the world, making a full recovery is arguably just as exciting.