Elisabeth Skeppner obtained a Bachelor of Science in Social Work degree in the mid 1980s and started work in 1990 as a medical social worker at Örebro University Hospital. Since 1998 she has been working at the Department of Urology, with a focus on patients with urological cancers and sexological issues. She began to study sexology, and these studies, in combination with daily work involving in particular male patients and their sexual side effects after treatment for cancer, formed the basis for her further interest in research. Elisabeth was registered as a doctoral student in 2004 and has since then conducted her research project at the School of Health and Medical Sciences at Örebro University, Sweden.

This thesis presents one retrospective and one prospective study with the focus on patients with penile carcinoma treated with organ-sparing laser technique. The overall aim of the studies was twofold: first, to evaluate symptoms and treatment seeking among patients, and second, to examine to what extent sexual function and sexual activities are affected by the organ-sparing laser treatment for penile carcinoma.

The results from the present thesis highlight the embarrassment men may feel when in need of medical advice concerning genital symptoms and the delay this causes them in seeking treatment. Furthermore, the organ-sparing technique has been found to offer good, satisfying cosmetic results and a possibility of maintaining sexual activities and function to a great extent. Overall life satisfaction was found at par with the general population at most of the domains of closeness, health, leisure and provision. Exceptions were patients somatic health and at follow-up, sexual satisfaction.

Penile carcinoma is a rare malignancy in western societies. It is hoped that the results from this thesis will contribute to increased awareness in the population and among professionals in health care services about both the treatment seeking process for these men and the sexual outcomes after organ-sparing treatment.