



PREVALENCE OF FATIGUE IN HEAD AND NECK CANCER SURVIVORS

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Introduction

In Head and Neck cancer (HNC) patients (pts), fatigue is present throughout the course of treatment and during follow up. There are limited data about the prevalence and factors associated with fatigue in HNC survivors.

Objectives

To assess the prevalence of fatigue and its interference with daily life activities; to examine the association between fatigue and gender, age, HPV status, previous oncologic therapy, primary tumor site, and time since end of treatment.

Methods

Locally advanced consecutive HNC pts having completed curative treatment since at least one year and free of disease were asked to fill in the Brief Fatigue Inventory (BFI) questionnaire. Fatigue was categorized according to BFI score in absent (0), mild (1-3), moderate (4-7) and severe (8-10).

Results

From 2/2015 till 7/2016, 129 pts (median age 60 years old; 67% male) were evaluated.

Primary sites of cancer were oropharynx (45%, with 4 out of 5 pts HPV positive), nasopharynx (23%), larynx/hypopharynx (15%), oral cavity (13%) and paranasal sinus or salivary gland (4%). Oncologic treatment was completed 12 to 45 months earlier (median 34 months).

Fatigue was reported as absent in 16% of the pts, mild in 66%, moderate in 11% and severe in 7%. No association between BFI score and the analyzed variables was identified.

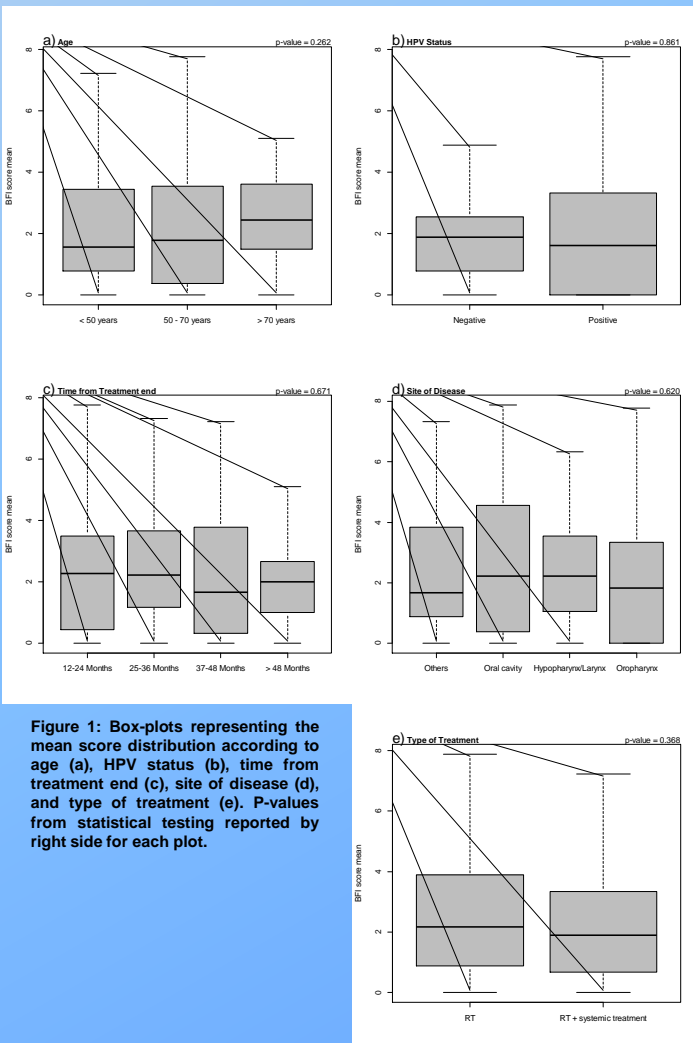


Figure 1: Box-plots representing the mean score distribution according to age (a), HPV status (b), time from treatment end (c), site of disease (d), and type of treatment (e). P-values from statistical testing reported by right side for each plot.

		N	%
		129	
Age (years)			
Median (IQR)	60 (52-68)		
	24-52	37	28.7%
	52-60	34	26.4%
	60-68	26	20.2%
	68-89	32	24.8%
Gender	M	87	67%
	F	42	33%
Primary site	Oral cavity	17	13.2%
	Ethmoid sinus	3	2.3%
	Hypopharynx	6	4.7%
	Larynx	12	9.3%
	Oropharynx	59	45.7%
	HPV POS	47	79.7%
	HPV NEG	12	20.3%
	Nasopharynx	29	22.5%
	Salivary glands	3	2.3%
End of treatment (months)			
Median (IQR)	34 (22-45)		
	[12, 22]	33	26%
	[22, 34]	33	26%
	[34, 45]	33	26%
	[45, 96]	30	23%

Table 1 – Clinical and demographic data

Intensity of fatigue	N	%
Absent	20	16
Mild	86	66
Moderate	14	11.0
Severe	9	7.0

Table 2 - Absolute and relative frequency of Fatigue Intensity

Conclusions

Moderate and severe fatigue was reported in 18% of HNC survivors. Further research is needed to assess its causes and to improve therapeutic management.