

# AN EVALUATION OF PATIENTS' PERCEPTION ON PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR THYROID CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR CARERS

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## Introduction

- Incidence of thyroid cancer is rising
- Psychological/emotional distress is a common response among thyroid cancer patients
- It is standard practice that all thyroid cancer patients undergo holistic assessment and referred for further psychological support accordingly

## Purpose

The primary aim of current study was to elicit thyroid cancer patients' opinions about the provision of psychological and emotional support available at our centre.

## Materials and methods

- 47 patients with thyroid cancer were invited to complete a questionnaire
- 22 completed
- response rate = 46.8 %

## Results

- The majority of sample was female patients
- Mean age of patient population = 45 years (range 20-69)
- Meantime since diagnosis = 2 years

### Patient's response about emotional/social problems being asked

- 66% patients reported having been asked about the emotional/social problems at some point during the cancer care
- 30% did not perceive they have had any emotional support throughout cancer care
- 4% did not reply

### Results on patients emotional difficulties

- 91% reported experiencing at least 1 of the emotional difficulty
- 47% experience difficulties in more than 1 problem area
- most frequently reported difficulty was "worry, fear or anxiety" = 30%

### Receiving emotional support

- 86% patients reported receiving helpful support of multiple form
- 9% reported receiving no emotional support
- 5% patients reported support was offered but it was not needed

### Emotional support was offered by a range of professionals

- nursing staff (30%)
- Hospital doctors (21%)
- General practitioners in the community (11%)
- MacMillan nurses 9%
- Clinical psychologist (6%)

### Emotional support to family/carers

- 70% patient reported that the family or carers were not offered any emotional support.

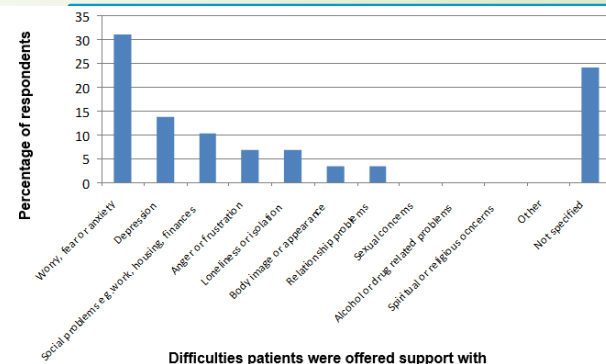


Figure: The emotional difficulties patients were offered support with (%)

## Conclusions

Our study illustrates thyroid cancer patient's perception towards the emotional support available at our centre.

More needs to be done, within the available resources, to provide psychological and emotional support to thyroid cancer patients as well as their families/carers

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