

A FACT-FINDING SURVEY OF CANCER PATIENT'S CONCERNS : UPDATED ANALYSIS

Kazumasa Yamamoto¹, Yuko Tanabe¹, Kiyomi Nonogaki¹, Hiroki Okumura¹, Haruka Ozaki¹, Masahiro Kuno¹, Shogo Watanabe¹, Kohji Takemura¹, Taro Yamanaka¹, Rika Kizawa¹, Takeshi Yamaguchi¹, Kiyo Tanaka², Yoko Kobayashi², Nobuko Tamura², Hidetaka Kawabata², Koichi Suyama¹, Yuji Miura¹

1) Department of Medical Oncology, Toranomon Hospital, Tokyo, Japan 2) Department of Breast and endocrinology, Toranomon Hospital, Tokyo, Japan



Background

- Cancer treatment has undergone drastic changes in recent years.
- The emergence of molecular targeted drugs, cancer immunotherapy, gene therapy, etc
- Symptom relief through advances in supportive care, including antiemetics
- Cancer patients have a variety of problems.
- A wide variety of side effects
- Physical pain, mental pain, social pain, spiritual pain
- Significant impact on quality of life, psychological well-being, treatment decisions and outcomes¹⁻³⁾
- Few studies have comprehensively examined the concerns of cancer patients.
- This study was presented at Japanese Society of Medical Oncology 2022 when 110 people participated in the survey.

Objectives

- To investigate the problems and concerns of cancer patients at our hospital.
- To assess concerns by gender and by age
- To identify and provide the information of patients' needs

Patients and methods

Study design Questionnaire survey

Study Population

- 20 years old or older patients who have been diagnosed with cancer and have attended our hospital from August, 2021 to December, 2022.

Data Collection

- The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the physician based on the patient's consent.
- A list of questionnaire include 74 items
- Patients were asked to rate the degree of distress using a 4-point scale: 0 (none); 1 (mild); 2 (moderate); and 3 (severe).

Statistical analysis

- Student t-test analyses and Turkey-Kramer test were performed.
- A p value less than .05 was regarded as statistically significant.
- All statistical calculations were performed using Jmp[®]16

Questionnaire contents

Table 1. Questionnaire items

12 categories	74 items
General (7)	Physical decline, Fatigue, Fever, Headache, Other pain, Weight loss, Weight gain
Digestive system (10)	Anorexia, Nausea/vomiting, Diarrhea, Constipation, Abdominal pain, Bloating, Oral mucositis, Dysgeusia, Dry mouth, Colostomy
Cardiovascular system (4)	Palpitations, Hypertension, Hypotension, Edema
Respiratory system (4)	Cough, Sputum, Dyspnea, Hoarseness
Nerves (5)	Paresthesia of limbs, Muscle weakness, Dizziness, Tinnitus, Memory impairment
Eyes (2)	Impaired vision, Dry eyes
Mental health (3)	Depression, Insomnia, Anxiety
Urinary system (3)	Dysuria, Hematuria, Nephrostomy
Skin (12)	Itchiness, Redness, Pigmentation, Nail changes, Dry skin, Acne, Hair loss, Eyelash loss, Eyebrow loss, Other hair loss, Hand-foot syndrome, Lymphedema
Sexual function (4)	Menstrual disorders, Menopausal disorders, Pregnant/Delivery, Sexual life
Social life (10)	Impact on spouse, Impact on children, Family care, Housework/childcare, Employment, Finance, Hospital visits, Social support systems, Rehabilitation, Cancer counseling
Other (10)	Appearance change, Nutrition, Blood tests, IV routes, CV ports, Imaging tests, Communication with health care providers, Treatment options, Supplements, Chemotherapy exposure

The following 15 items were extracted as appearance-related items.
Weight loss, Weight gain, Colostomy, Redness, Pigmentation, Nail changes, Dry skin, Acne, Hair loss, Eyelash loss, Eyebrow loss, Other hair loss, Hand-foot syndrome, Lymphedema, Nephrostomy, Appearance change, CV port, edema

Results

Table 2. Demographics and Characteristics

Questionnaire responses were obtained from 300 patients.			
	n	%	
Age, median 66 (25-90)			
Elderly (≥65)	165	55.0	
Non-Elderly (<65)	135	45.0	
Gender			
Male	127	42.3	
Female	173	57.7	
Type of cancer			
Breast	84	28.0	
Gastrointestinal	82	27.3	
Urologic	52	17.3	
Cholangiopancreatic	44	14.3	
Gynecologic	20	6.7	
Other	18	6.0	
Extent of disease			
Local	26	8.7	
Metastatic, Recurrence	274	91.3	
Current Treatment			
Chemotherapy	254	84.7	
Chemoradiation	3	1.0	
Hormone	29	9.7	
Follow-up observation	6	2.0	
BSC	8	2.7	
Living with family			
Yes	249	83.0	
No	47	15.7	
Unknown	4	1.3	

Limitations

- The questionnaire survey was conducted in Japanese, and its validity in other languages is unknown.
- In this study, more than 80% of cancer patients were aware of physical decline and fatigue.
- Cancer-related fatigue is reported to be present in 65% of cancer patients.⁴⁾
- The presence and degree of fatigue should be regularly screened.⁵⁾
- Moderate aerobic and resistance exercise is recommended^[1, 8)]
- Female patients had significantly higher mean values than male patients.
- This study uncovered differences in the types or characteristics of concerns between male and females.

Discussions

Table 3. Mean of the total score by gender and age

Female patients had significantly higher mean values than male patients.					
Mean of the total score (n)		Gender		P-value	
All		Male	Female		
All	27.06±19.18 (300)	22.53±16.09 (127)	30.79±20.57(173)		0.01
Elderly	24.86±17.84 (165)	22.35±17.42 (93)	29.86±20.83 (72)		0.01
Non-Elderly	29.76±20.44 (135)	23.03±11.93 (34)	30.76±20.48 (101)		0.04
p-value		0.83	0.78		

Table 5. Ten most frequent symptoms

✓ More than 80% of cancer patients were aware of Physical decline and fatigue.									
Rank	Symptoms	Patients reporting Symptom %	All	Mean degree of distress					
				Gender			Age		
				Male	Female	p-value	Elderly	Non-Elderly	p-value
1	Physical decline	81.67	1.21±0.83	1.17±0.81	1.24±0.83	0.42	1.27±0.84	1.14±0.80	0.19
2	Fatigue	80.54	1.20±0.84	1.09±0.79	1.28±0.86	0.05	1.21±0.83	1.20±0.86	0.95
3	Muscle weakness	65.89	1.06±0.97	0.98±0.92	1.11±1.00	0.27	1.18±0.93	0.90±0.99	0.01
4	Paresthesia of limbs	62.96	1.06±1.04	0.94±1.02	1.15±1.04	0.08	1.09±1.06	1.03±1.02	0.64
5	Hair loss	54.85	0.99±1.08	0.66±0.96	1.23±1.10	<0.01	0.84±1.06	1.16±1.07	0.01
6	Other pain	52.04	0.84±1.03	0.68±0.84	0.95±1.14	0.03	0.73±1.01	0.97±0.94	0.05<
7	Anxiety	50.51	0.72±0.86	0.54±0.74	0.85±0.91	<0.01	0.68±0.84	0.78±0.88	0.30
8	Constipation	48.66	0.68±0.83	0.58±0.71	0.75±0.92	0.07	0.65±0.86	0.71±0.82	0.53
9	Depression	47.81	0.63±0.79	0.54±0.72	0.70±0.82	0.10	0.63±0.77	0.64±0.81	0.94
10	Impact on spouse	46.34	0.62±0.77	0.62±0.71	0.62±0.81	0.95	0.55±0.73	0.70±0.81	0.08

Conclusions

- This study illustrated the actual situation of cancer patients' problems at our hospital.
- Female cancer patients show significantly more worries than male patients.
- Cancer-related fatigue is the most significant problem that plagues cancer patients.
- We plan to conduct further network analysis to examine the relationship between the concerns.
- The results of this study will be expected to develop a support program that focus on the concerns of cancer patients.

Table 4. Mean of the total score by cancer type

No significant difference between cancer types.	
Cancer type	
Breast Cancer	30.45±20.99
Gynecologic	30.35±19.90
Cholangiopancreatic	27.66±16.86
Gastrointestinal	26.63±16.86
Other	26.00±15.90
Urologic	20.86±19.21

Comparison by Subgroup

- Non-Elderly had significantly higher mean value than Elderly patients, possibly reflecting the larger proportion of female among Non-Elderly.
- No statistically significant differences were found by cancer type.

Table 6. Comparison of categories by gender

Female patients scored significantly higher on the items related to appearance etc.				
Mean of the total score for each category	Male	Female	p-value	
General	3.87±2.62	4.67±3.69	0.04	
Digestive System	3.28±2.94	4.33±3.61	<0.01	
Cardiovascular System	0.86±1.27	1.24±1.52	0.02	
Respiratory System	0.88±1.30	0.98±1.77	0.57	
Nerves	2.72±2.45	3.22±2.78	0.11	
Eyes	0.80±1.11	1.11±1.38	0.04	
Mental health	1.49±1.87	2.11±2.20	<0.01	
Urinary System	0.71±1.13	0.35±0.83	<0.01	
Skin	3.69±4.56	5.72±5.22	<0.01	
Sexual function	0.11±0.51	0.30±0.78	0.17	
Social life	2.71±3.21	3.50±3.98	0.07	
Other	1.39±1.94	2.82±3.31	<0.01	
Appearance	4.93±5.38	7.78±6.55	<0.01	

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