

How do patients with head and neck cancer and low skeletal muscle mass experience cisplatin-based chemoradiotherapy? A qualitative study

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Background

- Treatments for head and neck squamous cell carcinoma (HNSCC), especially cisplatin-based chemoradiotherapy (CRT), often come with considerable toxicities.
- Patients who have low skeletal muscle mass (SMM) face a heightened risk of complications related to treatment.
- Gaining insight into patient experiences can aid in developing effective supportive care strategies.

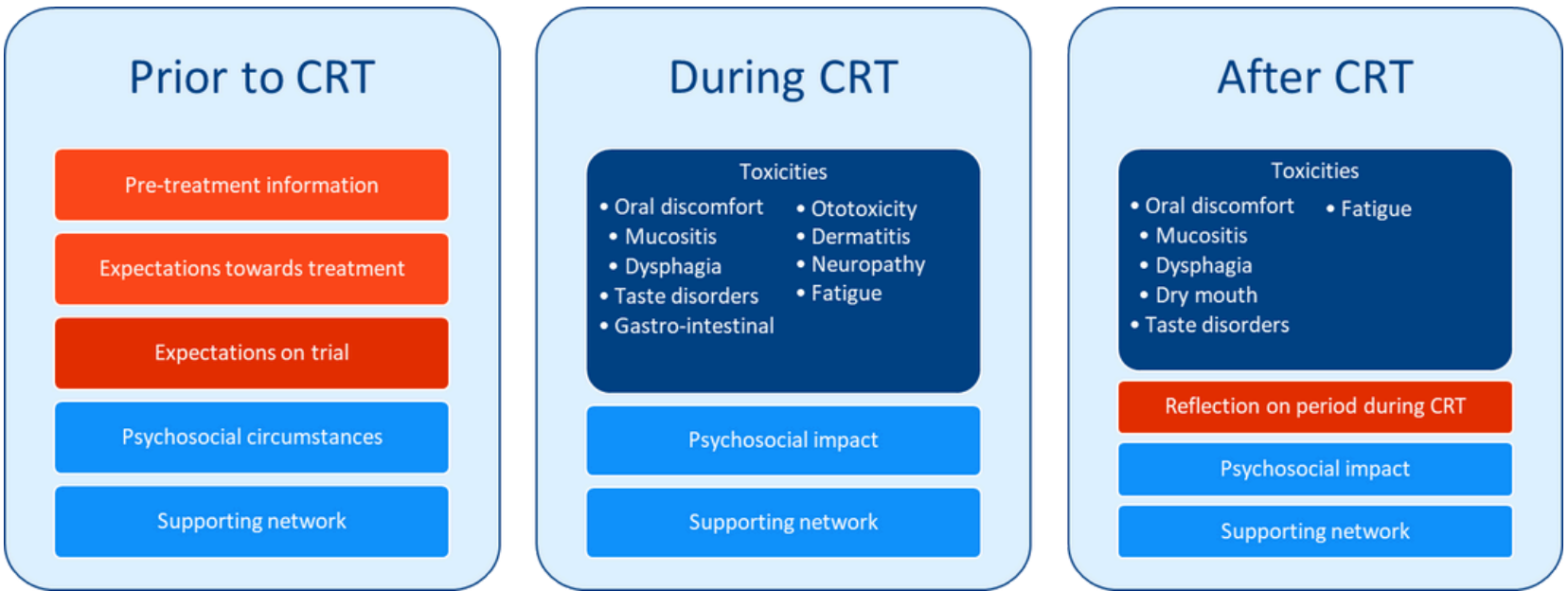
Methods

- Design: Qualitative study.
- Participants: Patients with HNSCC and low SMM.
- Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews conducted three months post-CRT.
- Analysis: Thematic analysis to identify key themes across treatment phases.



Objective

To explore the expectations and experiences of patients with HNSCC and low SMM, regarding cisplatin-based CRT and the triweekly (100 mg/m²) or weekly (40 mg/m²) cisplatin regimen.



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Conclusions

- Cisplatin-based CRT is perceived as a life-altering and distressing experience by patients with low SMM.
- Supportive networks and coping strategies are crucial for managing treatment challenges.
- Tailored counseling and on-demand consultations are recommended to address individual patient needs.
- No differences were noted in patient perceptions of different cisplatin regimens.

Implications for Practice

- Integrate patient-centered approaches to address the unique challenges faced by HNSCC patients with low SMM.
- Enhance communication and support mechanisms throughout the treatment continuum.
- Consider individualized counseling sessions to better prepare patients for treatment-related experiences.



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