

THE PERCEIVED PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS OF THE CANCER PATIENTS

Genoosha Namassevayam¹, Sambasivamoorthy Sivayokan², Chrisanthi Rajasooriyar²

¹Allied Health Sciences Unit, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

²Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Introduction

Cancer alters the order, nature & the depth of the perceived needs. While caring a patient holistically, it is necessary to understand the depth of psychosocial needs rather than narrowly equating them with psychological distress & anxiety.

Objectives

To identify the perceived psychosocial needs of cancer patients and to investigate the clinical and socio demographic variables associated with the needs.

Methods

This descriptive cross sectional study was conducted at Cancer Unit, Teaching Hospital, Jaffna during the period of March - April 2013. Hundred adult cancer patients diagnosed within the past 6- 12 months were subjected to this study. The perceived state of psychosocial needs & the association of such needs with the variables were analyzed.

Results

‘The help in dealing the negative feelings’ and the ‘need of someone to share worries and feelings’ were perceived by 53% and 68% of participants respectively. The willingness for formal counselling was expressed by 28% of participants. 91% of patients were keen on receiving correct information about the diagnosis, 71% wanted to know the treatment plan and 68% were interested in knowing the prognosis of their illness. Patients who were young (aged less than 61 years) and belonged to female sex were having significantly higher need of someone to share their worries and feelings ($p= 0.047$ and $p=0.040$ respectively) and having formal counselling ($p= 0.012$ and $p= 0.009$ respectively) than the older patients and male counterparts.

Conclusion

The findings of this study may help the cancer care professionals to widen the awareness of increasing psychosocial needs among the cancer patients. Attempts should be made to address these issues.