Quality of Life in Adult Cancer Patients with Dependent Children: An Integrative Review

Gabriela Mota-George, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, AOCNP
Department of Breast Medical Oncology, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Background & Significance

- 24.7% of cancer patients have dependent children
- Incidence of cancer patients with dependent children may rise
- Young cancer patients face unique challenges
- No recent systematic review on quality of life (QoL)
- With an understanding of QoL, healthcare professionals can best provide patient-centered care

Methods

- PubMed and Scopus searched from 12/12/2006 to 12/12/2021
- 280 search results
- 394 articles through citation searching
- 9 articles included: 6 cross-sectional and 3 longitudinal
- Inclusion criteria:
  - English
  - Parental cancer patients with children ≤ 18
  - Objective instrument to measure patients’ QoL
  - Report patients’ QoL results

Population Studied

- 1846 patients (Average age 40-47)
- 1 – 4+ children aged 0 – 18
- Diagnosis to 6 years after Stage I – Stage IV
- Most patients:
  - Women
  - Breast Cancer
  - In Partnerships
  - Employed
  - Educated
  - Middle to High Socioeconomic Status

QoL Instruments

- Short Form Health Survey
- European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer QoL Questionnaire
- Dutch RAND-36 Health Survey
- The Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy—General
- Dutch Impact of Event Scale

Findings

Population Studied

- 1846 patients (Average age 40-47)
- 1 – 4+ children aged 0 – 18
- Diagnosis to 6 years after Stage I – Stage IV
- Most patients:
  - Women
  - Breast Cancer
  - In Partnerships
  - Employed
  - Educated
  - Middle to High Socioeconomic Status

QoL Results

- 1st year of diagnosis:
  - Low global QoL
  - Lowest scores psychosocially; highest physically
  - 1-2 years post diagnosis:
    - Improvement in QoL
    - Deficits in cognitive and emotional functioning
  - > 2 years post diagnosis:
    - Low mental and physical QoL

QoL Comparisons

- Compared to the norm:
  - Low QoL at diagnosis, during initial treatment, and up to six years after
- Compared to other cancer patients:
  - Mixed results
  - Compared to patients with mental illness:
    - Improved mental QoL

Discussion

Limitations

- Most studies cross-sectional
- Lack of heterogeneity
- High mortality, palliative intent, and mental illness excluded

Implications

- Low QoL in parental cancer patients
- Average age 40-47: Beyond Adolescent and Young Adult but not yet geriatric
- Use valid/reliable QoL tools
- Assess survivors
- Future research: longitudinal designs, expand population studied, risk factors and effective interventions for decreased QoL

Acknowledgements

With special appreciation to Dr. Ashley Martinez, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, AOCNP, CPHQ, NEA-BC, NPD-BC, and Dr. Joyce Dains, DrPH, JD, APRN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAANP, FAAN, for assistance with manuscript preparation, as well as Laurissa Gann, MSLS, AHP, for her contribution to this review

References