



Psychiatric Comorbidities in Oncological Patients

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Abstract:

Introduction: Oncological patients have many psychiatric comorbidities. Whatever the therapy, the burden of the immediate, long term and late effects of these treatments adds to the inherent distress.

Aims: The objective of the study was to assess the psychiatric comorbidities and the quality of life of oncological patients receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Methods: 65 patients with different localization tumors were included in this observational study. Some receiving chemotherapy, some radiotherapy and some both. All patients were assessed using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) for anxiety and depressive symptoms, Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MOCA) for cognitive impairment and Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire – Short Form (Q-LES-Q-SF) for the quality of life before the oncological treatment and after one or three months of treatment. Patients with diagnosis criteria for depression or anxiety disorders received the recommended psychotropic treatment.

Results: Patients with brain tumors receiving radiotherapy had lower scores on MOCA tests as opposed to patients receiving chemotherapy for any type of cancer that scored lower on the MOCA during their chemotherapy. Men scored more for anxiety and while women seemed more depressed but with better perspective on their outcome. The quality of life was correlated with the level of disability produced by the disease and treatment. 23 patients received antidepressant treatment during the study for depressive symptoms or anxiety. Patients receiving antidepressants showed better scores on HADS, MOCA and Q-LES-Q-SF scales.

Conclusions: Psychiatric comorbidities are very frequent among oncological patients and can affect their quality of life. Antidepressant use among these patients could be neuroprotective and could improve their quality of life.

Keywords:

Oncological Patients, Chemotherapy, Radiotherapy, Psychiatric Comorbidities, Quality of Life, Depression, Anxiety, Cognitive Impairment