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Measuring health-related quality of life impacts among head and neck cancer patients of a developing country

Sobia Bilal and Jennifer Geraldine Doss
International Medical University, Malaysia

Objective: Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) information can provide useful prognostic and treatment decision-making information for head and neck cancer patients. This cross-sectional study aimed to assess the impact of head and neck cancer and its treatment on the HRQoL of Pakistani head and neck cancer patients.

Methodology: The Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy -Head and Neck (FACT-H&N)-V4 in Urdu language was administered using face-to-face interviews among a consecutive clinical convenience sample of 361 head and neck cancer patients in three identified tertiary care settings in Karachi, Pakistan. Socio-demographic details were obtained from patients whereas clinical details were extracted from their medical records. The correlations between the factors (socio-demographic and clinical) and the FACT summary scales were statistically analyzed with 'general linear modeling' (GLM) using 'multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)'.

Results: Overall poor to moderate HRQoL was noted among the sample group. Highest negative impact noted for Emotional-well-being domain whereas least impact was noticed for Social-well-being. A significant gradient showed higher scores for patients with small tumors (0-2cms), oral cavity tumors, early stage tumors (I &II) and those under pre-treatment phase; whereas lowest scores were noted for those patients with large tumors (>6cms), laryngeal/pharyngeal tumor, SCC, late stage tumors (III & IV), and in the on-going treatment status and palliative care group.

Conclusion: This study reports significant impact of head and neck cancer and its treatment on Pakistani patients. Physicians and surgeons in developing countries should be cognizant of the importance these factors in the HrQOL of their patients.

Biography

Sobia Bilal is a lecturer in the School of Dentistry at the International Medical University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

sobiabilal@imu.edu.my

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