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Psychosocial distress and quality of life among cancer patients treated with chemotherapy

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Cancer and its treatment can adversely impact patients' psychosocial functioning and quality of life (QOL). Accurate identification of problems experienced by patients is crucial for achievement of appropriate anticancer treatment. Although few studies have examined QOL among patients receiving chemotherapy, to the best of researchers knowledge no previous studies have examined this in combination with other clinically highlighted outcomes (e.g., psychosocial distress) in general and specifically in Saudi Arabia. A cross-sectional, correlational study was conducted to fill gap in knowledge of the relationship between psychosocial distress and quality of life among cancer patients treated with chemotherapy. The study was conducted at oncology wards on a convenient sample of 100 Saudi cancer patients receiving chemotherapy. RAND-36 QOL, Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety and Beck Depression Inventories were utilized for data collection. Participants had average age of 47.48 years, 12.57 months of illness and majority had stage III cancer. Significant negative correlations found between quality of life, participants' depression and anxiety scores. Illness duration and hemoglobin had significant correlations with each other (-0.40) and with majority of variables under study. Significant differences also found between levels of anxiety as well depression in relation to illness duration, hemoglobin and QOL. On the basis of study results, assessment of negative impact of chemotherapy treatment offered a unique opportunity to better understand cancer patients' problems, consequently the subjectivity of patients' supportive care needs. It is recommended that future research, should further tackle the course of QOL and psychosocial health for long-term cancer survivors on chemotherapy treatment. Other factors that might impact survivors' response to cancer chemotherapy like social support should also be considered in future studies.

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