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Singapore Cancer Society, Singapore

Meeting sexual health requirements in the cancer journey

The diagnosis and clinical course of cancers have immediate as well as lasting impacts on the quality of relationship, intimacy, sexuality and overall life of patients and their partners. In spite of its rising awareness as an integral part of holistic health, sexual concerns in this isolated group are often neglected and underserved within the clinical care provision. Studies indicate that the sexual readjustment or rehabilitation is a major challenge for a collective prevalence of sexual disorders in about 30-90% of this subpopulation. Clinically, a significant number of these patients may present with declines in the important domains of their sexual response cycle. In a vast majority, the issues can be further aggravated by negative psycho-emotional attitudes including stigma, low self-esteem and altered body image perceptions. Together with oncological advances in early detection and treatment, there is significant improvement in the long-term survival and post-treatment life expectancy of cancer patients. It is therefore imperative for the healthcare professionals to identify interventional measures that will succeed in recovering the sexual quality of life for their patients as well as partners. Identified modalities should incorporate a systematic assessment, intervention and follow-up for the sexual problems, psychosexual counseling and couple therapy and appropriate referral (if necessary), for a meaningful and lasting improvement on the overall symptoms and quality life care of their cancer patients and partners.

Biography

B Srilatha has completed Post-graduate Medical degree from Madras University, India and PhD in Sexual Medicine from the National University of Singapore (NUS). She works as a Clinical Sexologist and Senior Researcher under Psychosocial Support Services, Singapore Cancer Society. She is an active Member of the International Society for Sexual Medicine (ISSM) representing the Communications Committee and is in the Executive Committee of the Asia Pacific Society for Sexual Medicine (APSSM) and has impactful publications in leading international referenced journals. Also, she is a Council Member of Asia-Oceania Federation for Sexology (AOFS) and the Vice-President of Singapore's Society for the Study of Andrology and Sexology (SSASS).

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