Prevalence of Pattern of Psychiatric Disorders Among Cancer Patients: A Prospective Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Cancer is a leading cause of death. Psychiatric morbidity post-cancer onset increases in direct association with the level of disability, advanced illness and pain. Hence; we planned the present study to assess pattern of psychiatric disorders in cancer patients.

Materials & Methods: The present study included evaluation of psychiatric disorders in cancer patients. A total of 50 cancer patients were included in the present study. A questionnaire was prepared to obtain the psychiatric illness among the patients. All the results were recorded on the excel sheet. Analysis of the result was done by SPSS software.

Results: Psychiatric illness was present in 60 percent of the study population. Anxiety and depression were the most common type of psychiatric disorders encountered.

Conclusion: Psychiatric illness is present in significant proportion in cancer patients.

Key words: Cancer, Morbidity, Psychiatric.

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INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a leading cause of death. The prevalence of single or multiple psychiatric disorders in advanced cancer patients are still poorly understood.¹ ² Estimates for depression range from 3-38%. Early studies using rigorous methods reported lower rates of psychiatric disorders in early-stage cancer compared to subsequent studies that were conducted using less sophisticated methods or smaller sample sizes.³ Psychiatric morbidity post-cancer onset increases in direct association with the level of disability, advanced illness and pain, following, e.g., the biological effects of the malignancy, side effects of certain chemotherapeutic drugs, grief about current and anticipated losses, mutilation, and fear of death.⁴ ⁵ Accordingly, timely and accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment of comorbid mental disorders is required in an effort not only to increase quality of life but also to reduce adverse effects on cancer course, length of hospital stay, treatment adherence and efficacy, and possibly prognosis and survival.⁶ ⁷ ⁸ Hence; we planned the present study to assess pattern of psychiatric disorders in cancer patients.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study was planned in the department of psychiatry of Government S.K. Hospital, Sikar, Rajasthan and included evaluation of psychiatric disorders in cancer patients.

A total of 50 cancer patients were included in the present study. Complete clinical and demographic details were included in the present study.

Exclusion criteria

- Patients with past history of psychiatric illness,
- Patients with family history of psychiatric illness,
- Patients with any known drug allergy,

A questionnaire was prepared to obtain the psychiatric illness among the patients. Criteria as described previously in the literature were used for assessing the psychiatric disorders among cancer patients.¹⁰ All the results were recorded on the excel sheet. Analysis of the result was done by SPSS software. Univariate regression curve was used for assessment of level of significance.

RESULTS

A total of 50 patients were included in the present study with mean age of 58.1 years. Out of 50, 35 were males and remaining 15 were females. Lung cancer and head and neck cancer were the most common type of cancer encountered in the present study. Psychiatric illness was present in 60 percent of the study population. Anxiety and depression were the most common type of psychiatric disorders encountered.
In the present study, we observed that psychiatric morbidity was present in 60 percent of the cancer patients with anxiety and depression being the most common psychiatric illness encountered. Gopalan MR et al assessed the prevalence of Psychiatric disorders in cancer patients and to find out the factors associated with Psychiatric disorders in Cancer Patients. Adult patients (18 years of age and above), having a diagnosis of carcinoma were selected by consecutive sampling method. A questionnaire which included back ground data, socio economic variables, treatment variables like type of malignancy, exposure to radiation & chemotherapy prior to the evaluation and current treatment, co-occurring medical illness & treatment and past & family history of psychiatric illness was used to collect data. Delirium rating scale and MINI International neuropsychiatric interview were used to assess Psychiatric disorders and delirium.

Of the 384 assessed, 160 (41.7%) had psychiatric disorders. Adjustment disorders were seen in 22.6%, 10.9% of subjects had delirium. Anxiety and depression being the most common psychiatric illness was used to collect data. Most of the patients (67.9%) suspected that they had a cancer diagnosis and it arouses suspicion about the diagnosis directly may be stressful to the patient because it arouses suspicion about the cancer and treatment, and consequently can lead to psychiatric disturbance.

**DISCUSSION**
In the present study, we observed that psychiatric morbidity was present in 60 percent of the cancer patients with anxiety and depression being the most common psychiatric illness encountered. Gopalan MR et al assessed the prevalence of Psychiatric disorders in cancer patients and to find out the factors associated with Psychiatric disorders in Cancer Patients. Adult patients (18 years of age and above), having a diagnosis of carcinoma were selected by consecutive sampling method. A questionnaire which included back ground data, socio economic variables, treatment variables like type of malignancy, exposure to radiation & chemotherapy prior to the evaluation and current treatment, co-occurring medical illness & treatment and past & family history of psychiatric illness was used to collect data. Delirium rating scale and MINI International neuropsychiatric interview were used to assess Psychiatric disorders and delirium.

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**REFERENCES**

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