

Hellenic patients' problems and needs in palliative care A survey of hospitalized cancer patients

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Objectives: Needs assessment is an important factor in developing a new palliative care service. In Hellas, palliative care is at its infancy. Exploring Hellenic patients' personal palliative care needs is essential to achieve the goals of "Galilee" a newly established collaborative palliative home care unit.

Study purpose was the investigation of problems and unmet needs in palliative care and desire for home care professional attention of Hellenic cancer patients.

Methods: The convenient sample consisted of 103 cancer patients hospitalized in an oncology hospital of Athens.

Study inclusion criteria:

- Cancer diagnosis
- Informed consent
- Desire for professional care from a home care unit
- Good verbal communication in Hellenic language

Study Measurement Instruments

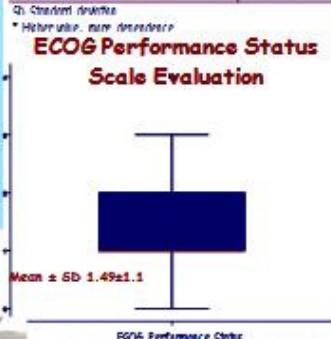
- **Problems and Needs in Palliative Care Questionnaire** (short version): a self-report translated and validated in Hellenic language instrument consisted of 64 three point Likert scale items: **Activities of Daily Living** (3), **Physical Symptoms** (9), **Autonomy** (4), **Social Issues** (5), **Psychological Issues** (5), **Spiritual Issues** (3), **Financial Issues** (2), **Informational Needs** (1) in:
 - Problems Subscale (32 items)
 - Need for Care Subscale; (32 items)
- **Ability of performing daily life activities (ADL):** observer-reported 5 four point Likert scale items, estimating patients ability of mobility, eating, clothing, hygiene and use of toilet.
- **ECOG Performance Status Scale**
- **Demographic and Clinical Data**

Results

Demographic Data		Disease Clinical Data		Antineoplastic Treatment Clinical Data	
	Frequency Percentage (%)		Frequency Percentage (%)		Frequency Percentage (%)
Sex		Cancer Diagnosis		Previous Treatment	
Female	95 49.2	Εγκέφαλο	51 26.4	Surgery	89 44.1
Male	75 38.9	Εκτοπνευμονικό	29 15.0	Chemotherapy	74 38.3
Age (mean ± SD) (range)	60.72 ± 13.0 (24 - 94)	Γενιτά	27 14.0	Radiation	25 12.8
Family status		Λύμφο	23 13.0	Present Treatment	
Married	121 62.7	Ηπατοχοληστερική	16 8.3	Surgery	52 26.9
Widow	28 14.3	Πνευμονική	14 7.3	Chemotherapy	71 36.2
Not married	17 18.8	Χημειοθεραπεία	13 6.7	Radiation	7 3.6
Living With		Μεταστάσεις	73 37.8	Reason of Admission	
Partner	79 40.9	Όστεο	16 8.2	Cancer diagnosis management	56 29.0
Traditional family	47 24.4	Λύμφο	14 7.2	Surgery	32 16.6
Other	26 13.3	Εγκέφαλο	12 6.7	Chemotherapy	26 13.5
Alone	30 15.5	Εκτοπνευμονικό	12 6.7	Follow up	18 9.3
		Χημειοθεραπεία	12 6.7	Supportive care management	15 7.8

Patient's Ability of Performing ADL Evaluation

Ability of Performing ADL	Mean ± SD
Mobility (1-5)*	1.57 ± 0.8
Hygiene (1-5)*	1.57 ± 0.8
Clothing (1-5)*	1.46 ± 0.8
Eating (1-5)*	1.44 ± 0.7
Use of Toilet*	1.38 ± 0.8



Patients reported more autonomy, financial, psychological, daily living activities and informational and less spiritual, physical and social problems and needs

Patients' Reported Problems and Needs in Palliative Care

Problems in Palliative Care Questionnaire Subscale	Mean ± SD
Autonomy*	1.13 ± 0.7
Financial Issues*	1.13 ± 0.7
Psychological Issues*	0.95 ± 0.6
Activities of Daily Living*	0.92 ± 0.7
Informational Needs*	0.91 ± 0.8
Spiritual Issues*	0.86 ± 0.6
Physical Symptoms*	0.69 ± 0.4
Social Issues*	0.47 ± 0.5

Correlations of Patients' Reported Problems in Palliative Care with ECOG Performance Status

Problems in Palliative Care Questionnaire Subscale	Rho	p
Activities of Daily Living	0.692	<0.001
Physical Symptoms	0.335	0.001
Autonomy	0.611	<0.001
Social Issues	0.077	0.483
Psychological Issues	0.279	0.006
Spiritual Issues	0.347	0.001
Financial Issues	-0.920	0.380
Informational Needs	0.068	0.513

Patients who reported higher problems and needs, except financial and social issues and informational needs in palliative care had a poorer performance status and a lower ability of performing daily life activities

Conclusions: These preliminary findings highlight the main areas that "Galilee" has pursue. Further exploration of autonomy, psychological, financial, daily living activities and informational issues should help to tailor its services to cover the Hellenic patients' palliative care needs.



Correlations of Patients Reported Problems in Palliative Care with Ability of Performing Daily Living Activities Evaluation

Problems in Palliative Care Questionnaire Subscale	Mobility		Eating		Clothing		Hygiene		Use of Toilet	
	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p
Activities of Daily Living	0.700	<0.001	0.571	<0.001	0.710	<0.001	0.702	<0.001	0.705	<0.001
Physical Symptoms	0.496	<0.001	0.377	<0.001	0.487	<0.001	0.449	<0.001	0.440	0.001
Autonomy	0.576	<0.001	0.573	<0.001	0.537	<0.001	0.558	<0.001	0.523	<0.001
Social Issues	0.163	0.116	0.215	0.040	0.167	0.108	0.196	0.064	0.133	0.205
Psychological Issues	0.231	0.018	0.241	0.015	0.197	0.045	0.232	0.020	0.175	0.078
Spiritual Issues	0.337	0.001	0.347	0.001	0.312	0.002	0.332	0.001	0.234	0.023
Financial Issues	0.027	0.787	0.175	0.078	0.008	0.934	0.100	0.322	0.033	0.742
Informational Needs	0.035	0.725	0.174	0.081	0.122	0.218	0.177	0.078	0.100	0.317

Do Hellenic Patients Need or Want Professional Attention for their Palliative Problems and Needs?

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Study Measurement Instruments

Objectives: Giving patients the opportunity to express their personal needs for professional care and planning to satisfy their problems is a crucial aspect of providing appropriate palliative care, and developing a new service.

Study purpose was the description of Hellenic cancer patients' need for professional attention in relation to palliative care problems and needs.

Methods: Study sample was consisted of 103 patients with a cancer diagnosis, hospitalized in a cancer hospital in Athens, who consented to participate to the study.

- Problems and Needs in Palliative Care Questionnaire (short version): a self-report translated and validated in Hellenic language instrument consisted of 64 three point Likert scale items: Activities of Daily Living (3), Physical Symptoms (9), Autonomy (4), Social Issues (5), Psychological Issues (5), Spiritual Issues (3), Financial Issues (2), Informational Needs (1) in:
 - Problems Subscale (32 items)
 - Need for Professional Care Subscale: (32 items)
- Ability of performing daily life activities (ADL): observer-reported 5 four point Likert scale items, estimating patients ability of mobility, eating, clothing, hygiene and use of toilet.
- ECOG Performance Status Scale
- Demographic and Clinical Data

Demographic Data		Disease Clinical Data		Antineoplastic Treatment Clinical Data	
Sex	Frequency Percentage (%)	Cancer Diagnosis	Frequency Percentage (%)	Frequency Percentage (%)	Frequency Percentage (%)
Female	95 49,2	Breast	51 26,4	Previous Treatment	
Male	75 38,9	Gastrointestinal	29 15,0	Surgery	19 46,1
Age (mean ± SD) (years)	60.72 ± 13.0 (24 - 74)	Genital	27 14,0	Chemotherapy	74 38,3
Family status		Urology	25 13,0	Radiation therapy	25 13,0
Married	121 62,7	Hematology cancer	16 8,3	Present Treatment	
Widow	28 14,5	Heart-Vein	14 7,3	Surgery	52 26,9
Not married	17 8,8	Metastases	73 37,8	Chemotherapy	71 36,8
Living With		Other	13 6,7	Radiation therapy	7 3,6
Partner	79 40,9	None	16 8,2	Reason of Admission	
Traditional family	47 24,4	Urology	14 7,2	Cancer diagnosis	56 29,0
Other	26 13,5	None	12 6,7	Advanced disease	32 16,6
Alone	30 15,5			Surgery	26 13,5
				Chemotherapy	18 9,3
				Follow up	15 7,8
				Therapy side effects management	

Patients reported higher need for professional attention in managing autonomy, psychological, financial, informational spiritual and daily living activities and less for physical and social.

Need for Professional Care Questionnaire Subscale	Mean ± SD
Autonomy*	1.24 ± 0.7
Psychological Issues*	1.14 ± 0.6
Financial Issues*	1.14 ± 0.7
Informational Needs*	1.13 ± 0.8
Spiritual Issues*	1.02 ± 0.6
Activities of Daily Living*	1.02 ± 0.7
Physical Symptoms*	0.66 ± 0.4
Social Issues*	0.60 ± 0.5

* Higher value, more problems and needs

Correlations of Patients Reported Needs for Professional Care in Palliative Care with Ability of Performing Daily Living Activities Evaluation

Needs for Professional Care Subscale	Mobility		Eating		Clothing		Hygiene		Use of Toilet	
	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p	Rho	p
Activities of Daily Living	0.613	<0.001	0.316	<0.001	0.605	<0.001	0.562	<0.001	0.648	<0.001
Physical Symptoms	0.495	<0.001	0.400	<0.001	0.439	<0.001	0.399	<0.001	0.439	0.001
Autonomy	0.403	<0.001	0.381	<0.001	0.329	0.001	0.340	0.001	0.362	<0.001
Social Issues	0.049	0.649	0.142	0.186	0.037	0.732	0.086	0.431	0.057	0.599
Psychological Issues	0.265	0.008	0.291	0.004	0.194	0.055	0.189	0.066	0.232	0.022
Spiritual Issues	0.189	0.075	0.267	0.012	0.183	0.084	0.185	0.092	0.181	0.092
Financial Issues	0.028	0.784	0.195	0.054	0.013	0.900	0.055	0.598	0.129	0.208
Informational Needs	-0.021	0.837	0.142	0.161	0.044	0.663	0.122	0.234	0.060	0.555

Association Between Patients' Reported Needs for Professional Care in Palliative Care and Metastasis Existence

Need for Professional Care Subscale	Mean ± SD		Mean Difference ± SD	MWU	p
	Metastatic	No Metastatic			
Activities of Daily Living	2.0 ± 2.2	2.2 ± 2.6	0.2 ± 0.5	312.5	0.490
Physical Symptoms	7.6 ± 4.6	4.7 ± 3.6	2.9 ± 0.5	426.5	0.002
Autonomy	5.4 ± 2.3	3.9 ± 3.2	1.5 ± 0.7	547.5	0.058
Social Issues	3.8 ± 3.7	2.1 ± 3.3	1.6 ± 0.8	511.5	0.051
Psychological Issues	7.0 ± 3.0	4.3 ± 3.0	2.1 ± 0.7	550.5	0.014
Spiritual Issues	4.0 ± 2.0	2.5 ± 2.4	1.5 ± 0.5	494.0	0.014
Financial Issues	2.6 ± 1.3	2.0 ± 1.5	0.6 ± 0.3	597.0	0.051
Informational Needs	1.3 ± 0.8	0.3 ± 0.9	0.5 ± 0.2	594.0	0.012

Patients' reporting higher needs for professional attention except financial issues and informational needs had a poor performance status, lower ability of performing daily life activities and metastases.

Needs for professional care were strongly positively correlated with reports of problems and needs in palliative care

Correlations of Patients Reported Needs for Professional Care with Problems in Palliative Care

Need for Professional Care Subscale	Rho	p
Activities of Daily Living	0.867	<0.001
Physical Symptoms	0.848	<0.001
Autonomy	0.845	<0.001
Social Issues	0.924	<0.001
Psychological Issues	0.839	<0.001
Spiritual Issues	0.847	<0.001
Financial Issues	0.834	<0.001
Informational Needs	0.878	<0.001

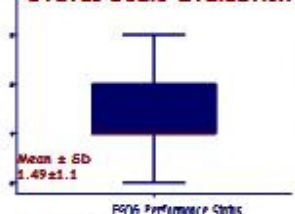


Conclusions: Although this study's results reveal Hellenic patients' problems and needs for professional attention in palliative care, further research is needed to specify the factors associated with them.

Correlations of Patients' Reported Needs for Professional Care in Palliative Care with ECOG Performance Status

Needs for Professional Care Subscale	Rho	p
Activities of Daily Living	0.519	<0.001
Physical Symptoms	0.325	0.003
Autonomy	0.445	<0.001
Social Issues	0.065	0.562
Psychological Issues	0.348	0.001
Spiritual Issues	0.307	0.004
Financial Issues	-0.106	0.321
Informational Needs	0.067	0.524

ECOG Performance Status Scale Evaluation



Patient's Ability of Performing ADL Evaluation

Ability of Performing ADL	Mean ± SD
Mobility (1-4)*	1.57 ± 0.8
Hygiene (1-4)*	1.57 ± 0.8
Clothing (1-4)*	1.46 ± 0.8
Eating (1-4)*	1.44 ± 0.7
Use of Toilet (1-4)*	1.38 ± 0.8

* Higher value, more dependence

