

Dignity of Greek Patients with Advanced Cancer: a Cross-Sectional Study

S. Katsaragakis¹, F. Deskou^{1,2}, S. Sgourou¹, M. Christou¹, M. Dimoula¹, K. Maniati^{1,2}, D. Protogiros¹, E. Patiraki^{1,2}

¹Nursing Department, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece, ²Palliative Care Unit Galilee of the Holy Metropolis Mesogaias & Lavreotikis, Spata, Greece

Background

A core concept in caring patients with advanced cancer is to treat them and preserve dignity independently the service of care.

This cross-sectional study's purpose was to explore the dignity of patients with advanced cancer.

Methods

A convenience sample of 99 (response rate 85%) patients with advanced cancer was recruited between April to December 2017 from a palliative care unit (day and home care) and oncology units (chemotherapy outpatient and inpatient) of an Oncology Hospital of Athens. Study inclusion criteria: Patients with advanced cancer (stage III or IV) who consented to participate. Patients with poor communication were excluded.

Data collection instruments:

- Greek adapted Patient Dignity Inventory, a 25 items, 5 point Likert scale (1 (no problem) - 5 (overwhelming problem) divided into: Symptom distress, Existential distress, Peace of Mind, Dependency, and Social Support. The tool provides a Total Dignity and subscales scores (Cronbach's Alpha .915).

- Greek adapted Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)

- Greek translated Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale - short version (ESAS)

- Demographic/ clinical form

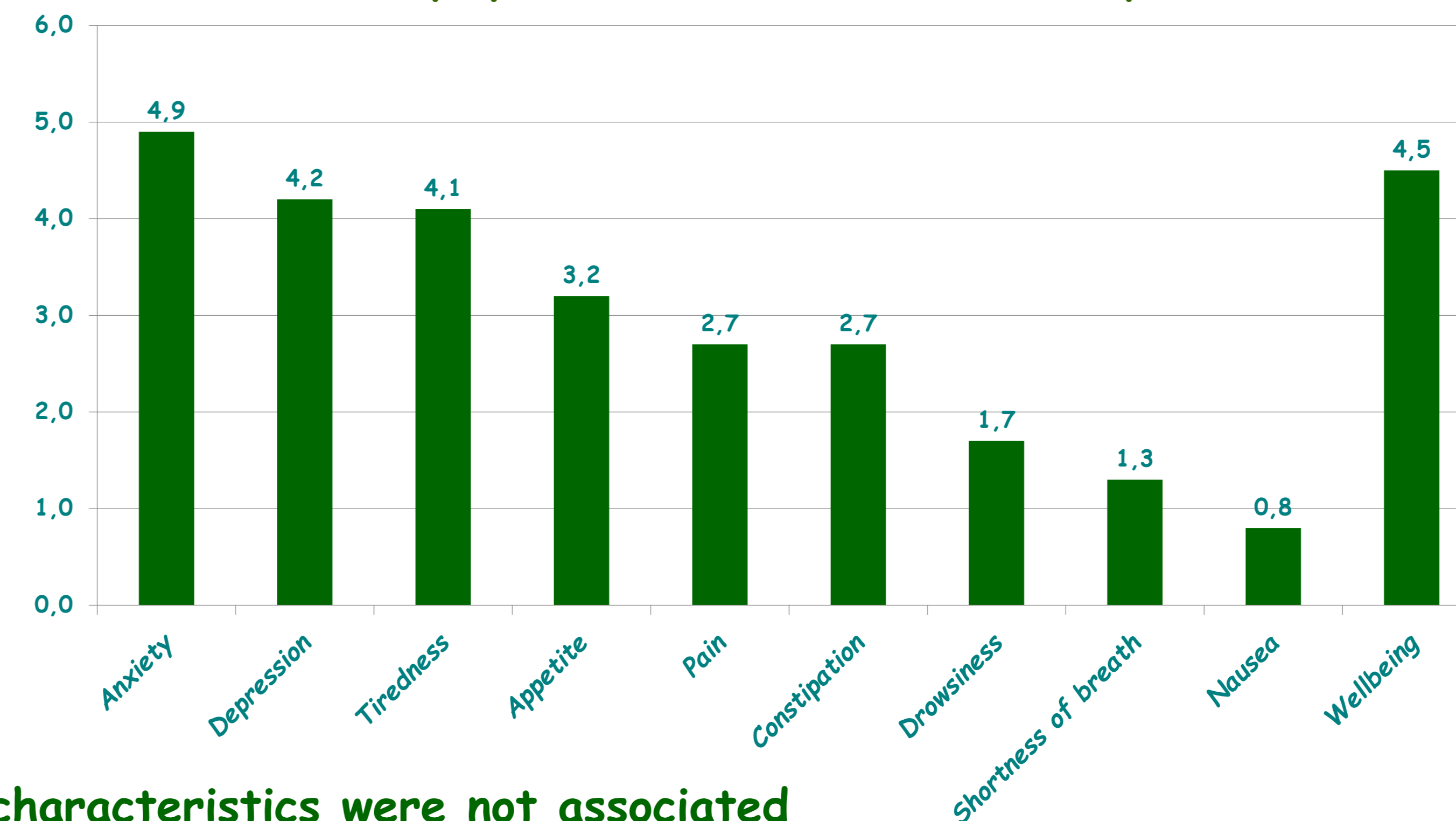
Patients' Characteristics	
	N=99 (%)
Sex	
Female	54 (54.5)
Male	45 (45.5)
Marital status	
Married	67 (67.7)
Window	17 (17.2)
Divorced	10 (10.1)
Education	
None	2 (2.0)
Basic	42 (42.4)
Moderate	28 (28.3)
Higher	21 (21.2)
Cancer diagnosis	
Breast	22 (22.2)
Colon	16 (16.2)
Lung	15 (15.2)
Pancreas	10 (10.1)
Hematologic	8 (8.1)
Gynecologic	7 (7.1)
Urologic	3 (3.0)
Other	9 (9.1)
Metastases	70 (70.7)
Care setting	
Hospital Outpatient	36 (36.4)
Hospital inpatient	20 (20.2)
Palliative home care	28 (28.3)
Palliative day care	15 (15.2)
	Mean ± SD (Range)
Age (years)	64.9±12.9 (37-87)
Time since diagnosis (years)	3.6±5.0 (35days to 30)
Time of hospitalization (days)	279±533.5 (1 to 2267)

SD Standard Deviation

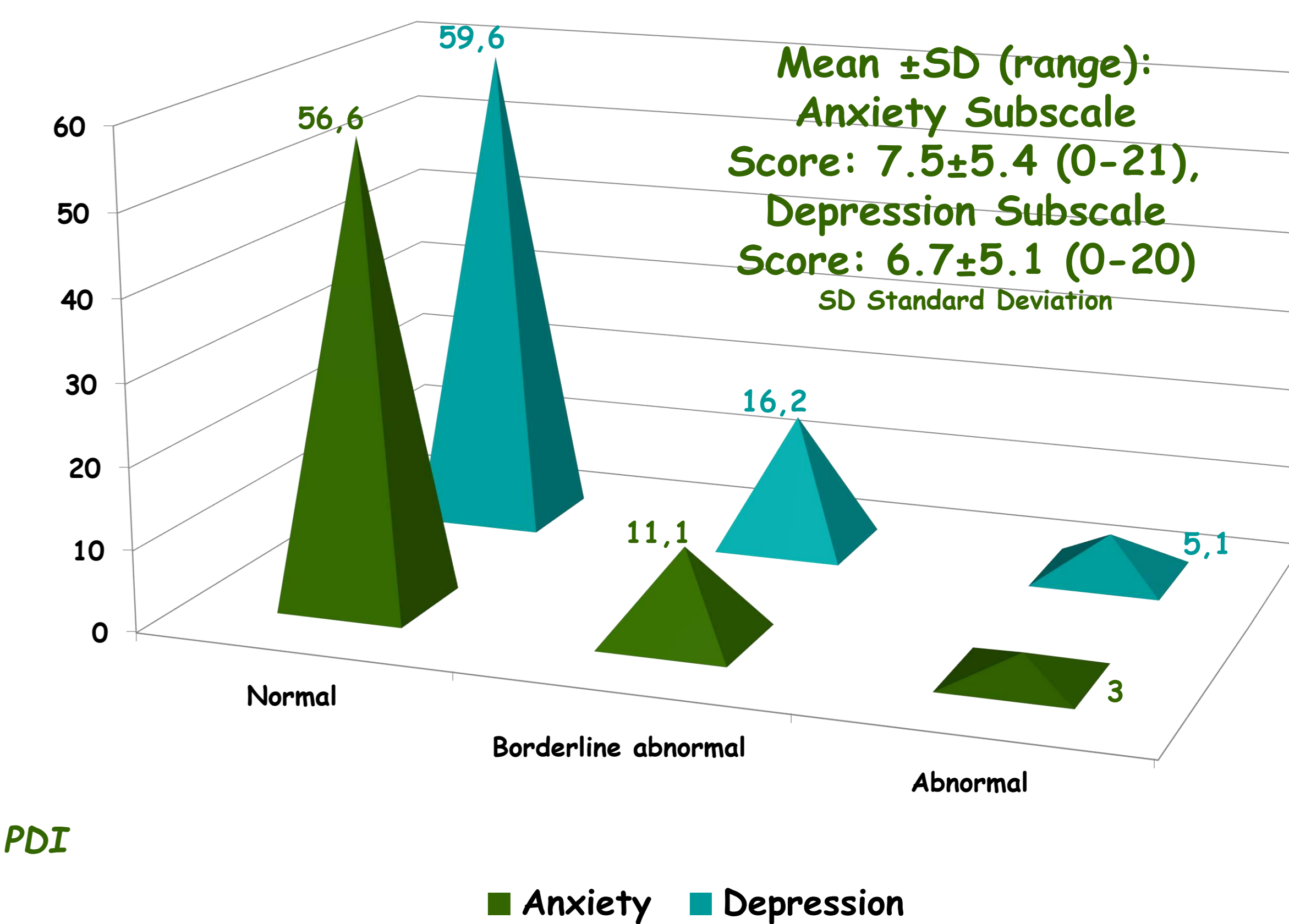
Patient's Mean Dignity Inventory's Scores (PDI)

	Mean ± SD (Range)
Total PDI (25-125)	50.2±17.1 (25-98)
Symptom Distress (6-30)	15.3±5.6 (6-28)
Existential Distress (6-30)	12.7±5.4 (6-28)
Dependency (3-15)	5.8±3.0 (3-15)
Peace of Mind (3-15)	4.7±1.8 (3-11)
Social Support (3-15)	4.5±2.8 (2-15)

Patient's Mean Symptom Assessment's Scores by ESAS (0-10)

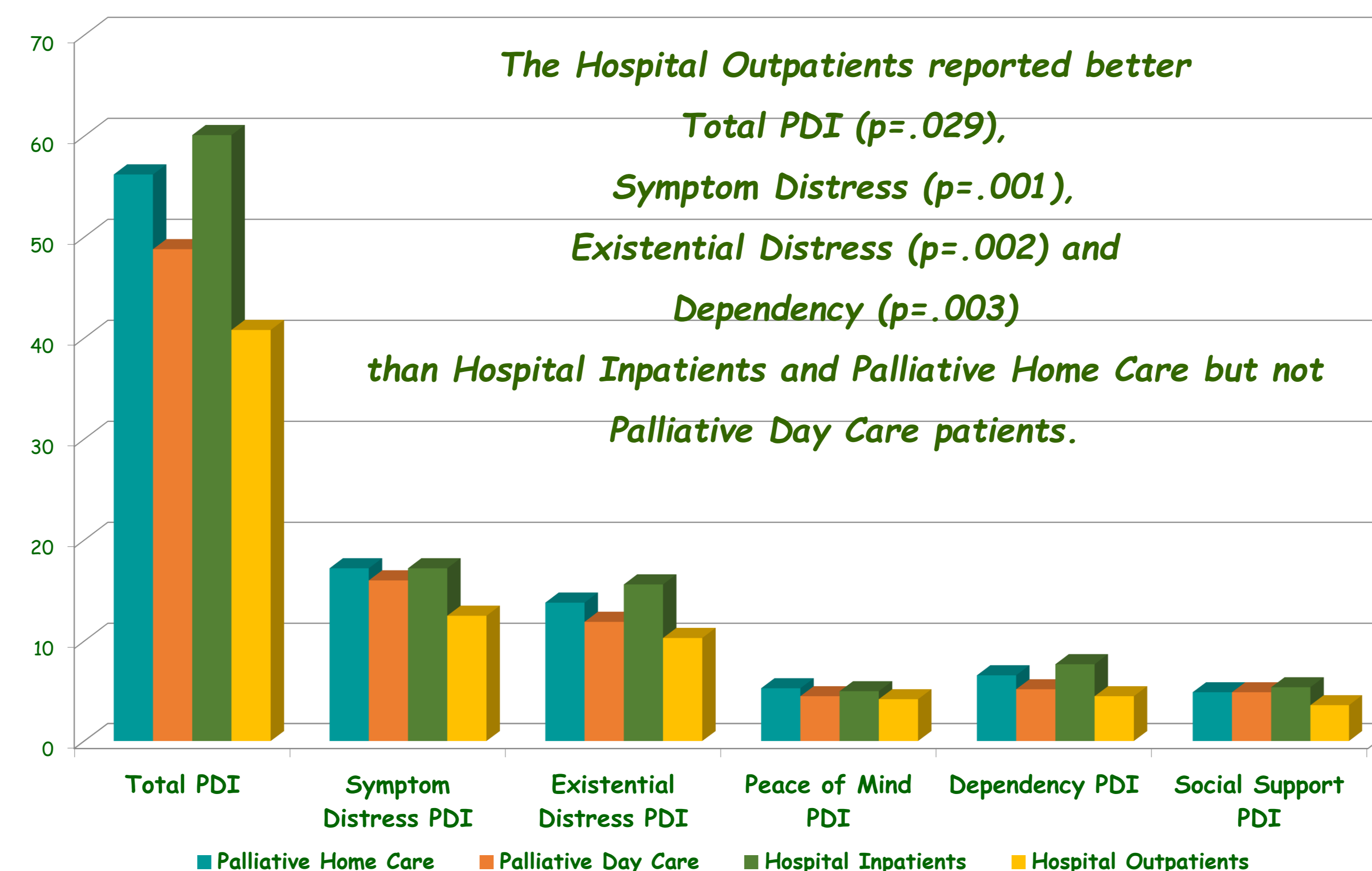


Patient's Anxiety and Depression Assessment by HADS



Most of the demographic and clinical characteristics were not associated with total or subscales scores of PDI ($p > .050$):

- Females reported less (4.9 ± 2.9) PDI Social Support than men (4.1 ± 2.8)
- Breast cancer patients reported less PDI Social Support than other cancer diagnosis patients ($\chi^2(10)=21.0, p=.022$)



Correlations of Patient's Total PDI Score with ESAS Scores

	r, p, N
Anxiety	.69, <.001, 98
Depression	.66, <.001, 97
Tiredness	.47, <.001, 99
Appetite	.35, <.001, 99
Pain	.542 <.0001, 99
Constipation	.21, .051, 88
Drowsiness	.18, .077, 99
Shorten of Breath	.28, .006, 98
Nausea	.01, .894, 99
Wellbeing	.48, <.001, 96

Correlations of Patient's PDI Scores with HADS Scores

	Anxiety Subscale r, p, N	Depression Subscale r, p, N
Total PDI	.71, <.001, 95	.73, <.001, 95
Symptom Distress	.69, <.001, 95	.68 <.001, 95
Existential Distress	.64, <.001, 95	.67, <.001, 95
Dependency	.28, .006, 95	.38, .006, 95
Peace of Mind	.51, <.001, 95	.41, <.001, 95
Social Support	.39, <.001, 95	.35, <.001, 95

Conclusions

The findings of this study support a quite good level of perceived dignity in Greek patients with advanced cancer. More research is needed to clarify the differences of dignity among various care settings.

We thank Special Account for Research Grants of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens for funding the study