

Symptom Burden and Concerns: Integrated Palliative Care Outcome Scale upon Admission to a Palliative Care Centre

H.A. Mullalli¹, M.F. Xenikou¹, T. Arnaouti¹, M. Parara¹, A. Tserkezoglou¹

¹"Galilee" Palliative Care Centre, Athens, Greece

General data

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Abstract text

Background/aims: Little is known about the multidimensional, complex needs of patients with advanced chronic disease in the community, in Greece. The Integrated Palliative Care Outcome Scale (IPOS) is widely used to explore problems and concerns of palliative care populations.

The aim of this analysis was to explore symptom burden, emotional and other concerns of patients, self-referring to a palliative care service, upon admission.

Methods: A retrospective descriptive analysis of the initial IPOS data was performed. Data retrieved from the patients' e-file, using SPSS 29.0.

Demographic and clinical characteristics of patients, cared at home or in the inpatient unit, were also analyzed.

Results: Questionnaires of all 652 patients, cared between June 2020 and September 2023, were analyzed. Median age was 70.1±13 years (range: 24-99), 53.5% were male. 92,3% had cancer and 7.7% Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). 50,2% were from home care, and 67% were patient version IPOS forms. Missing values were few in the most common symptoms (pain & dyspnea 1,2-1,5%) and higher in the emotional and other concerns' domain (between 4.6-14.8%). Patient's most prominent, clinically relevant symptoms (score ≥2) were poor mobility (66,7%), weakness (50,5%), pain (44,1%) and constipation (25,5%). Nausea (7,9%) and vomiting (3,6%) presented less frequently. Among the emotional concerns patient's (53,5%) or family's (80,5%) anxiety, spiritual needs (61%) and depression (48%) prevailed. Information (25,7%) and practical issues (20%) were only addressed occasionally or not at all.

Conclusions: High symptom burden may necessitate referral to specialist palliative care. IPOS portrayed the complexity of patients' needs and guided the initial multidisciplinary team's approach to address them.

Please read carefully and act if necessary!

Conflict of interest to declare?: No

General

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