

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

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BACKGROUND: 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.

AIM: 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.

PARTICIPANTS

Patients	N (652)
Sex	
Female	303
Male	349
Age (Median) (min- max range) years old	
	70.1±13 (24-99)
Cancer diagnosis	
	602 (92,3%)
ALS diagnosis	
	50 (7,7%)
Care setting	
Home Care	408 (62,6%)
Hospice	239 (36,7%)
IPOS version	
Patient version	437 (67%)
Staff version	215 (33%)
PPS	
30%	207 (31,7%)
40%	164 (25,2%)
50%	93 (14,3%)
Phase of illness	
Unstable	401 (66,6%)
Stable	168 (25,8%)

Table 1 : Patient- participants' demographics and clinical characteristics

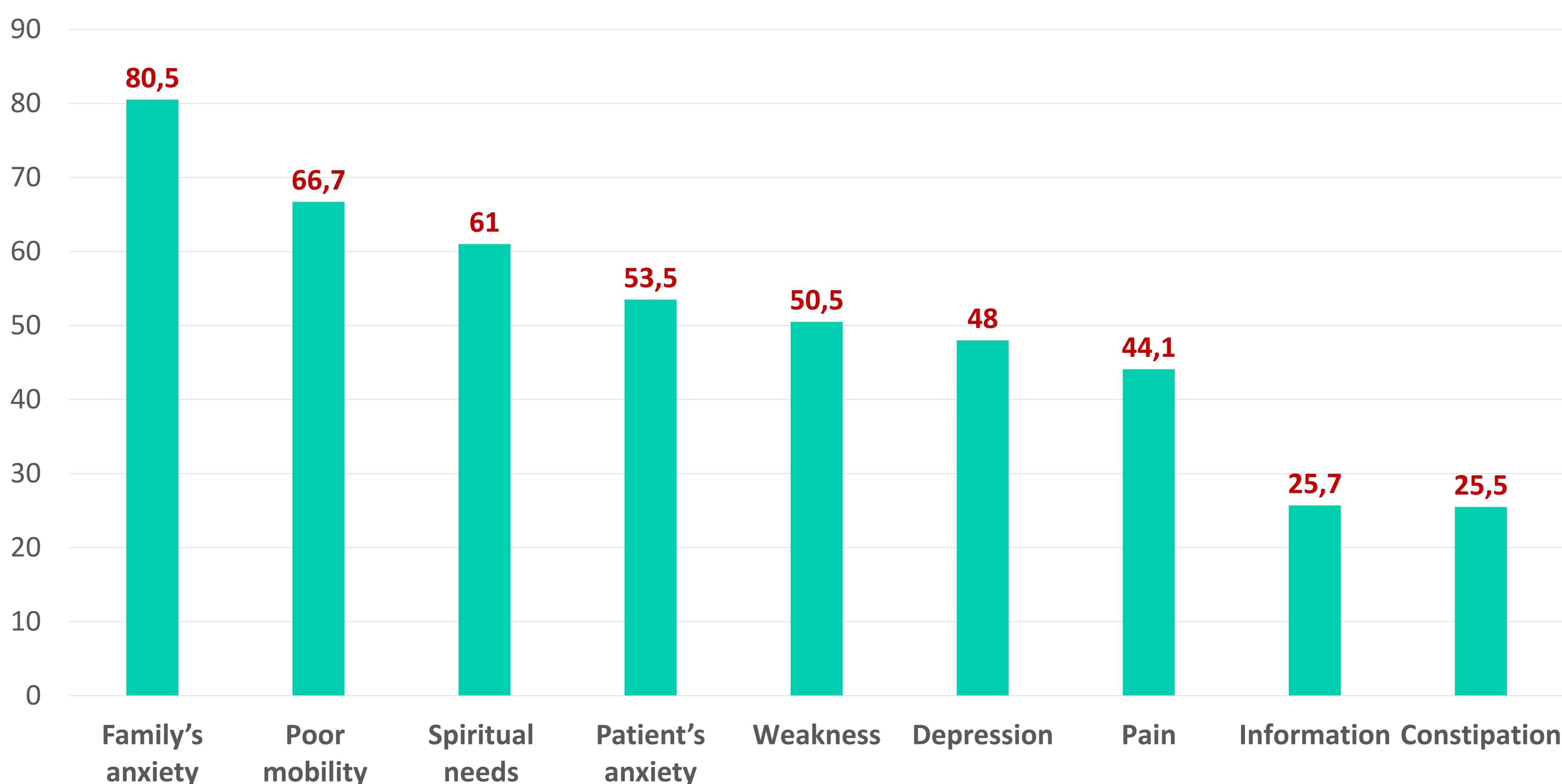


Table 2. Patient's most prominent, clinically relevant symptoms (score ≥2) upon admission.

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.

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