

International Journal of Health Science

Acceptance date: 05/02/2025

MENTAL HEALTH OF TERMINAL CANCER PATIENTS

Lucas de Azevedo Lazzarotti

Medical student at the Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis (UFR)

Amanda Regina de Souza Marini

Medical student at the Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis (UFR)

Diego Fernando de Almeida Cunha

Medical student at the Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis (UFR)

Guilherme Gonçalves dos Santos

Medical student at the Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis (UFR)

Laryssa da Silva Vieira

Medical student at the Universidade Federal de Rondonópolis (UFR)

All content in this magazine is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution License. Attribution-Non-Commercial-Non-Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).



Keywords: Health; Palliative; Spirituality;

INTRODUCTION

The mental health of terminally ill cancer patients is a crucial aspect of palliative care, profoundly influencing their outlook and quality of life. The emotional complexity that accompanies a terminal cancer diagnosis can generate a range of feelings, including fear, sadness, anxiety and depression.

OBJECTIVE

To investigate the mental health status of terminally ill cancer patients.

METHODOLOGY

This literature review was conducted by searching the PubMed databases. The search included the phrase “Mental health of terminal cancer patients” and its English translation. Articles from the last 10 years were considered. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established after reading the articles, and those that fit the theme were selected. The selected studies were then read and discussed by the authors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three articles were selected to assess terminal cancer patients’ awareness of their prognosis, mental health, quality of life and thoughts about death, using interviews conducted in various countries. The first study investigated 98 terminal cancer patients, 66.3% of whom were aware of their terminal prognosis. The results indicated that awareness of the prognosis was associated with better survival, cognitive function and quality of life (COREANO, 2020). These findings suggest that informing patients about their condition can provide significant benefits, such as better planning and coping with the disease, resulting in less pain and a better psychological state. The second study examined the relationship between

mental disorders and the wish for death in 377 cancer patients in palliative care. Around 115 patients expressed some wish for death, 69 of which were transient thoughts and 46 a genuine wish to die. Of those with a genuine wish, 24 had diagnosed mental disorders. Patients with a genuine wish to die and mental disorders reported greater physical, social, existential and psychological suffering (WILSON et al, 2016). These findings highlight the importance of assessing mental health in terminally ill patients who express a wish to die, as this may signal the need for a comprehensive assessment of the patient’s suffering. The third study focused on terminally ill cancer patients in Japan, where they reported fear of death and the dying process, as well as anguish over dependence on others. Many patients tried to accept their situation, recognizing the finitude of life. This study showed that patients who receive adequate emotional and spiritual support are able to find positive meaning despite their limitations and the proximity of death. Dissatisfaction with hospitalization and feelings of loneliness were frequently mentioned, indicating the need for more comprehensive support from healthcare professionals (WAJII et al, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The importance of an integrated and humanized approach to the care of terminally ill cancer patients is evident. Patients who received adequate palliative support reported greater satisfaction and quality of life, showing that the training and empathy of health professionals are crucial to minimizing suffering and providing a better quality of life in the final stages of the disease.

REFERENCES

COREANO, J. F. M. Efeito da conscientização sobre o prognóstico na sobrevivência e na qualidade de vida de pacientes com câncer em estado terminal: um estudo de coorte prospectivo. 2020. **Korean Journal of Family Medicine**. vol. 2, n. 41, p. 91-97, mar. 2020. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4082/kjfm.18.0113>

WAJJI, M. R.; ESLAVATH, R. J. Explorando as experiências de fim de vida de pacientes com câncer avançado da Índia. **Open Medical Publishing**, 2022. Pesquisa em Psicologia da Saúde. v.10, n. 2, jun. 2022. DOI: 10.52965/001c.36272

WILSON, K. G.; *et al.* Mental disorders and the desire for death in patients receiving palliative care for cancer. **BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care**, 2016. v. 6, p. 170–177. DOI: [doi:10.1136/bmjspcare-2013-000604](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjspcare-2013-000604)