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Abstract

Quality of life

COPING WITH CANCER: A PROSPECTIVE PSYCHO-SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF CANCER PATIENTS AND THEIR NON-MEDICAL CAREGIVERS (CG) – A GOIM STUDY

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The aim of this study was to carry out a psychosocial analysis of pts and their non-medical CG with the aim of evaluating the CG ability of coping with cancer and identifying areas of potential psychological/social intervention. A total of 108 pts and their main adult CG were accrued. Pts with severe psychiatric disorders were excluded. The CG had to be a family member, an adult individual without any severe disease and in case of multiple CG pts were asked to identify the principal CG. Among pts there were 83.3% F and 16.7% M. Most pts were married (66.7%) and had a low-medium literacy level (50.0%). Primary sites of tumour included: breast (66.7%) and colon-rectum (19.5%) whilst gall-bladder, liver, pancreas, prostate, and kidney accounted for 1.9%. Among CG 53.7% were F and 45.3% were M with a med-

ium-high literacy level. In 33.3% of cases the spouse was the main CG and in 38.9% was on of pts sons or daughters. A battery of 4 questionnaires (Q) were administered to pts and subsequently to the CG. The Mental Adjustment to Cancer-Q was administered to pts, and the Family Strain-Q (FSQ) to their CG. Moreover, the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support-Q (MSPSS) were administered to pts and CG. Among CG the correlation between FSQ and BDI scales has been analysed in order to evaluate relationships between emotional status and stress level: some FSQ subscales were positively correlated with depression levels ($p = 0.018$). Some FSQ subscales also correlated positively in the CG group with perceived social support evaluated by the MSPSS ($p = 0.013$). These preliminary data underline the importance of the non-medical CG for pts coping with advanced cancer and explore the needs of the CG themselves.

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