

Materials and Methods: The objective of our study was to evaluate the impact of HPCT in sexuality in autologous, allogeneic and singeneic HPCT patients aged 18–60 yr, with a minimal survival of 1 year. Data were obtained through a personal or phone interview based on the EORTC QLQ-C30 and Molassiotis and Morris questionnaire.

Our questionnaire asked about the meaning of sexuality and changes in this issue before and after transplant. Exclusion criteria were lack of collaboration disease relapse, lack of administrative data and death.

Results: 90% of the interviewed answer the questionnaire. Psychological sequelae were seen in 50% of patients, including fear (30%) and anxiety (25%). 50% of patients had sexual life alterations, mainly dyspareunia (25%) and inappetence (20%). 15% of patients related less sexual activity due to their physical aspect.

Conclusions: A great part of the patients assured that nobody asked them about their sexual life before and after transplant. They didn't know how transplant was going to change their sexuality and missed information in this issue. Although 50% of the interviewed presented sexual life alterations, quality of life and health perception were well punctuated.

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POSTER

Prevention of vaginal agglutination by women treated with radiotherapy for cervical cancer

A. Heli Hansen. *Odense University Hospital, Dept. of Oncology, Odense, Denmark*

Background: A large number of women get agglutination of the vaginal mucosa after radiotherapy. This results in the vaginal walls paste to each other. This is a contributory factor to sexual dysfunction.

Aim: To investigate how the use of dispence aid appliances can decrease the number of women with vaginal agglutination.

Design: Dispense sponge bag with aid appliances in the form of a dilator and exploration lotion together with a verbal as well as a written patient information. The women will be followed for six months, one year and two years after completing the radiotherapy.

Conclusion: Due to very positive feed back from the participants we made the initiative permanent. We didn't quite full fill our aim but we estimate this change of procedure as being beneficial for the entire group of women treated with radiotherapy for cervical cancer.

Needs of children with cancer

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POSTER

Young cancer patients between 15-20 years get the own youth section at an adult hospital department. The first in Denmark

S. Thykjær. *¹ Aarhus University Hospital, Department of Oncology, D1, Aarhus, Denmark*

Background: The background for the pilot project "Young People With Cancer" takes its starting point in the nursing and treatment of the young cancer patients and their relatives. Department D1 at Aarhus University Hospital has treated this group of young patients since 1995. The nurse Nuka Hove worked with the problem "Care for the Young Cancer Patient at an Adult Hospital Department" at the Further Education in Oncology (West) in Denmark in 1997/1998. The implementation of her work put focus on the 15 to 20-year-olds and their relatives. A television documentary in the autumn 1999 where young cancer patients and staff from the Department of Oncology D1 participated also put focus on this patient group. In connection with the budget for the year 2000 Aarhus County decided to spend 0.5 mio. DKK a year for 2 years to improve conditions for young patients with cancer.

Methods: To create an environment for the young patients based on wishes and needs expressed by the young patients themselves. To educate relevant groups of staff to manage treatment and nursing of the young cancer patients considering that this patient group has specific needs concerning care, information and possibilities of action. To develop communication tools in connection with treatment and nursing of the young patients, their parents and other members of their network. To prepare the young people for the changes in life after the treatment period. To offer out-patient nurse consultations in connection with control visits. To develop education material for the young patients. To communicate the methods developed to a broader group of health staff.

Conclusion: The first year has been very successfully. First of all we have organized 2 patientsrooms and a youth section in co-operation with our patients. The education of the staff is an ongoing process, but we can see the results of our work in the better and different care we give our patients and their family. Besides we have successfully developed communication tools, such as network talks and structured meetings, which has upgreated our care.

Needs of relatives and care givers

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POSTER

Participation of relatives in the care of cancer patients and support received from health care professionals

E. Eriksson¹, S. Somer². *¹ Laurea Polytechnic, Nursing and Health Care, Vantaa, Finland; ² School of Ruskeasuo, -, Helsinki, Finland*

This study aims to see to what extent relatives do take part in the care of cancer patients and to find out how relatives have been supported by health care professionals before and after the patient's death.

The data were collected with a structured questionnaire administered to relatives of cancer patients who had died in a hospice in southwestern Finland in 1998 and 1999. The final sample comprised 258 family members, most of whom were the deceased patient's spouses. The data were described by percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation. For the analysis of statistical significance we used the Mann-Whitney U-test and the Kruskal-Wallis test. Instrument reliability was ascertained by the Cronbach alpha coefficient.

The most central aspect of relatives participating was supporting the patient emotionally. Most of the relatives reported that they supported by visiting the patient in the hospital, being near the patient when he/she desires it, and being careful not to hurt the patients feelings.

Relatives felt that they had received a moderate amount of support from health care professionals. Before the patient's death they received more emotional than informational support. Relatives were informed most about patient's illness and treatment and daily condition. Over three-quarters of them said they had received a lot or a fair amount of information about them. Communication had been honest and based on the relatives needs. Emotional support before and after patient's death consisted mainly of acceptance of the relative and listening to what relatives had to say. Over half of them reported that staff did not talk with them at all or only rarely talked with them about their difficulties in everyday life. Among both patients and relatives some background variables were associated with the relatives participation in the patient's care and with the support received by the relative before the patient's death.

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POSTER

A reference book

H. Jongkind. *NKI/AVL, Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

In 1995 we developed in the Netherlands Cancer Institute a computer system for nursing guidelines. Now six years later the system contains not only 500 nursing guidelines but also guidelines for physiotherapists, dieticians and doctors in training as well as information for patients.

The new developments in the treatment of cancer made us realise that multidisciplinary guidelines are essential to ensure continuity and quality of care.

To make this possible we started a project in January 2001, funded by the European Commission. The goal of the project is to evaluate an XML application within the reference book, which will enable us to develop guidelines for all the different professionals with different roles during the route the patient is following when coming to the hospital, so called patient centred guidelines.

We would like to share our experiences and the preliminary results of this project especially because XML gives us the possibility to exchange guidelines with others.