

Assessment of health related quality of life in survivors of childhood cancer

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Current Psychiatry. Ain Shams University (Print)

2008 v15 n1

Survival itself has until recently been the marker of successful cancer therapy, but now more attention is being focused on the long-term effects of cancer therapy and the quality of life of the survivors. To assess health related quality of life in the childhood cancer survivors at Ain Shams Pediatric Oncology Clinic. To study any behavioral and psychological disturbances in these survivors.

This study was conducted on 30 childhood cancer survivors attending the cancer survivors' clinic at Ain Shams University hospital; Age range 6-16 years old males and females.

Diagnosis included acute leukemia survivors, lymphomas and solid tumors.

The PedsQL (pediatric health related quality of life questionnaire) 4.0 generic core scales (physical, emotional, social and school functioning) and the PedsQL 3.0 cancer module (pain, procedure anxiety, treatment anxiety, worry, cognitive problems, physical appearance and communications) translated into Arabic language have been utilized. Parallel child self-report and parent proxy-report questionnaire formats have been used. Cognitive function assessment using Wechsler intelligence scale for children Arabic version; together with behavioral problems assessment using Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) Arabic version was also applied to the survivors. There was statistically significant decrease in the overall generic PedsQL in cancer survivors compared to normal children, with school functioning area the most affected. In Cancer module of PedsQLO ,worry, and procedure anxiety scored the least (i.e. the most affected items in the cancer module). All survivors scored significantly lower scores compared to other cancer survivors indicating less quality of life in the ALL group. There was a strong positive correlation between child and parent reporting regarding physical, emotional, social, school, treatment anxiety, and cognitive problems while no correlation was established in the areas of pain, procedure anxiety, and worry. Although there was no statistically significant difference in this study group between the mean full IQ score of survivors who received CNS-directed therapy and those who did not receive it; there was a discrepancy between verbal and performance scores that might indicate organic brain dysfunction. 53% of the survivors in this study showed clinical range of social incompetence, 63% showed internalizing behavioral problems in the form of somatic complaints, anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal and 23% showed aggressive and delinquent behaviors.