

Patient reported symptoms of cancer treatment and patient satisfaction in BNGO practices – a survey among 2104 patients with gynaecologic tumors

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Abstract

Introduction: Gynaeco-oncologists associated in the BNGO perform routine surveys on patient satisfaction among their patients. In the 2015 survey, adverse effects of cancer treatment and disease symptoms among patients were also included.

Objectives: To monitor the quality of life and satisfaction of patients with gynaecologic tumors treated in BNGO practices.

Methods: From January to November 2015, 2104 patients with gynaecologic cancers treated

in 48 BNGO practices completed a printed questionnaire about their satisfaction with the practice, tumor- and therapy-related symptoms, and symptom burden. Chemotherapy patients reported side effects and rated the most distressing on a scale of 1 (least) to 10 (most).

Results: At least 96 % of all patients regarded the practice equipment, organisation and staff as very good or good. 99 % said their physician's attentiveness was very good or good and almost 100 % rated their physician's competence as very good or good. 99 % would seek treatment in the same practice again. The most frequent symptom in all

patients was fatigue. Most distressing were hot flushes. 71 % of patients received chemotherapy. 66 % rated the burden of chemotherapy high or extremely high. Alopecia was the most frequently reported side effect, followed by fatigue. Nausea and vomiting were rare. 84 % of patients had no vomiting on the day of chemotherapy and 82 % on the days after. Alopecia was considered the most distressing side effect of chemotherapy, followed by fatigue, tiredness, and delayed nausea.

Conclusions: Patients are very satisfied with their treatment in BNGO practices. Alopecia was the most distressing side effect of chemotherapy.

Objectives

The German Professional Association of Gynaeco-Oncology in Practices (BNGO) is dedicated to maintain and promote qualified treatment of patients with gynaecologic malignancies on an outpatient basis. Patient satisfaction is considered one of the indicators of the quality of care in health systems. A quality assurance study of the BNGO evaluated patient satisfaction as well as the burden caused by the disease and cancer treatment in gynaeco-oncology practices of the BNGO.

Methods

From January to November 2015, 2104 patients with gynaecologic cancers treated in 48 BNGO practices completed a printed questionnaire comprising 21 questions. Part 1 of the questionnaire consisted of questions about the practice situation in general. Part 2 included questions regarding the medical treatment of the patient, and part 3 of the questionnaire evaluated the burden of chemotherapy. Patients were also asked to make an overall assessment of their cancer treatment in the practice as well as to leave comments.

To answer part of the questions regarding the practice, patients could use pictograms. To report how often certain symptoms occurred, patients could use the following categories: never, seldom, sometimes, often and always/all the time. To assess the strength of burdensome symptoms patients used visual analog scales from 1 (least) to 5 or 10 (most).

Treatment

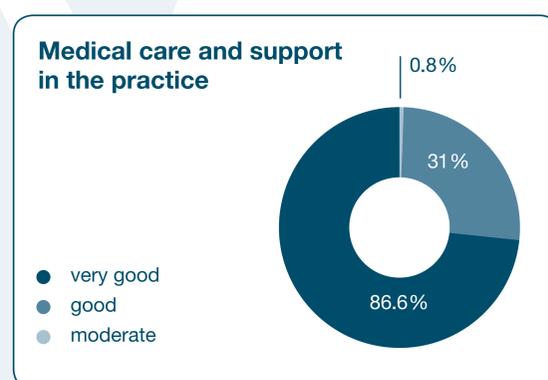
71 % of the patients interviewed received chemotherapy at the time of the survey. 39 % received radiotherapy and 31 % other types of medication. 56 % of patients had received surgery.

Results

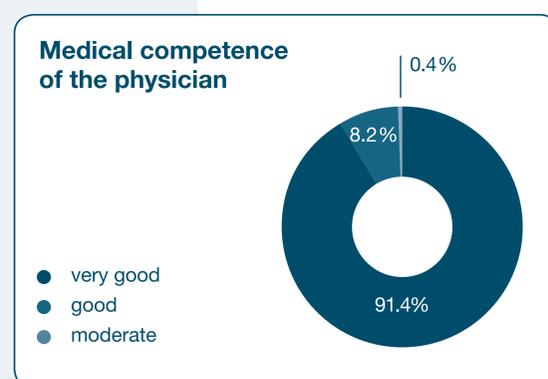
96 % of patients said they were given sufficient time for questions before or after their treatment. 96 % of patients assigned the grades "very good" or "good" for the rooms and facilities of the practices. The assessment of hygiene control and habits in the practices was similar: Almost 100 % said it was very good or good. Waiting areas were considered very good or good by 95 % of patients. 99.4 % of patients regarded the medical competence of the practice staff as very good or good.



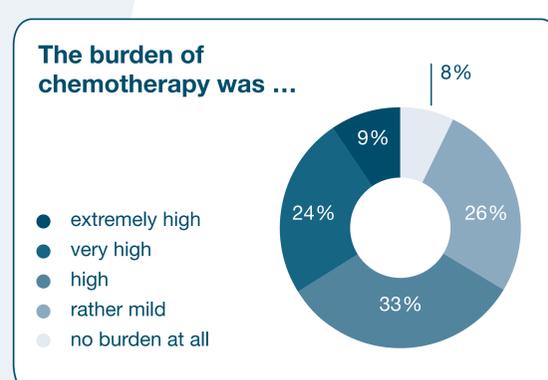
85 % of patients said the practice staff were very friendly.



99.6 % of patients considered the medical knowledge of their doctor very good or good.



66% of patients undergoing chemotherapy found chemotherapy burdensome or extremely burdensome. On the other hand, 34% of patients said chemotherapy was only mildly or not at all burdensome.



Very distressing or most distressing	Percentage
Hot flushes	52 %
Fatigue	38 %
Tiredness	37 %
Pain (bone)	33 %
Pain (muscles)	29 %
Nausea	23 %
Fear	21 %
Mood swings	20 %

Least distressing	Percentage
Pain (axilla)	56 %
Depression	50 %
Pain (breast)	49 %
Dizziness	45 %
Headache	44 %
Nausea	42 %
Fear	36 %
Mood swings	31 %

Always or often	Percentage
Alopecia	87 %
Tiredness	70 %
Fatigue	66 %
Tingling	46 %
Bone pain	41 %
Muscle pain	37 %
Nausea	36 %
Nail changes	36 %

Never or rare	Percentage
Fever	89 %
Vomiting, day 1	84 %
Vomiting, days 2–5	82 %
Rash	80 %
Diarrhea	70 %
Nausea, day 1	58 %
Constipation	53 %
Nausea, days 2–5	45 %

Very or most distressing	Percentage
Alopecia	50 %
Fatigue	34 %
Tiredness	31 %
Nausea, days 2–5	26 %
Tingling	25 %

Less or least distressing	Percentage
Fever	79 %
Vomiting, day 1	72 %
Vomiting, days 2–5	70 %
Rash	68 %
Diarrhea	61 %

In conclusion, 99 % of the patients taking part in the survey said they would seek treatment in the same practice again.

Conclusion

This survey among 2104 patients treated in 48 German gynaeco-oncology practices showed that most patients are very satisfied with the practice facilities and the medical care they receive in the gynaeco-oncology practices. According to the survey, almost all patients would seek treatment in the same practice again. Vomiting, which used to be one of the most feared side effects of chemotherapy, is now among the rarest side effects of chemotherapy. These results indicate the quality of the treatment patients with gynaecological cancers receive in gynaeco-oncology practices of the BNGO.

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