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Epidemiological analysis of SARS-CoV-2 virus infection in patients with solid tumors: The experience of Infanta Sofia University Hospital (HUIS)

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Background: The global SARS-CoV-2 outbreak has significantly affected hospital assistance to cancer patients. Diagnostic and treatment paradigms have been challenged with an urgent need for patient protection. In the absence of data to balance clinical decisions we aimed to analyze HUIS experience during the peak of the outbreak.

Methods: Cancer pts attended at HUIS since February 24th to April 24th were collected. Clinical management was adapted according to evolving international consensus. All PCR+ COVID-19 pts have been included in a database. Oncological and COVID-19 diseases characteristics as well as cancer management have been collected. The main objective of this analysis was to know the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection, hospitalization rate and mortality of cancer patients in our center during the outbreak and to identify potential predictive factors.

Results: Overall, 853 cancer pts had been attended at our department during this period of time. Twenty-six pts (3.05%) were hospitalized with confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis. Underlying solid tumors were the following: breast (256, 30.01%), GI (312, 36.8%), lung (100, 11.72%) and others (185, 21.47%). 322 pts (37.75%) had metastatic diagnosis. Underlying solid tumors were the following: breast (256, 30.01%), GI (312, 36.8%), lung (100, 11.72%) and others (185, 21.47%). 322 pts (37.75%) had metastatic diagnosis. 32.26%. Adequate testing and protective measures are mandatory to warrant an effective protection of the cancer pts receiving systemic treatment were enrolled in 4 Oncological Centers in Poland. The most common types of cancer were breast cancer (n=84), colorectal cancer (n=55) and melanoma (n=25). The level of cancer-related anxiety (CRA) and Fear of the COVID-19 scale were measured in numerous independent studies and validated Fear of COVID-19 Scale. The degree of adaptation to cancer was evaluated with the Mini-Mental Adjustment to Cancer scale (Mini-MAC). The study was performed on May 11-15th, 2020. Non-parametric tests and Spearman correlations were used for statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics are presented as median and interquartile range. The study was approved by the ethics committee.

Results: The median of CRA (6; 5-10) was higher than SRA anxiety (5; 3-8; p=0.025). The numerical and Fear of the COVID-19 scales were highly comparable (r=0.741; p<0.001). Gender (p=0.001) and tumor type (p=0.025) were significantly associated with SRA. The anxiety was higher in women (8; 5-10) than in men (5; 4-8) Patients with breast cancer had the highest SAR, while those with lung cancer had the lowest. Patients with high destructive attitude in Mini-MAC had higher SAR than with low attitude (p=0.001). Conclusions: The level of CRA was higher than SRA among oncological patients during SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. Women with breast cancer and patients with destructive attitude should be provided with increased psychological care. Despite changes in the functioning of oncological healthcare, continuity of care should be maintained.

Conclusions: The diagnosis and treatment of cancer are associated with anxiety of death and cancer recurrence. The outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has caused fear and anxiety among cancer patients. Incidence of severe and even fatal complications during SARS-CoV-2 infection is greater in the cancer patients, therefore recommendations of oncological therapy have changed. The aim of the study was the anxiety level analysis among oncology patients during SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in correlation with mental adjustment to cancer.

Methods: 306 patients, ≥18-years of age with histologically confirmed cancer and concurrently receiving systemic treatment were enrolled in 4 Oncological Centers in Poland. The most common types of cancer were breast cancer (n=84), colorectal cancer (n=55) and melanoma (n=25). The level of cancer-related anxiety (CRA) and Fear of the COVID-19 scale were measured in numerous independent studies and validated Fear of COVID-19 Scale. The degree of adaptation to cancer was evaluated with the Mini-Mental Adjustment to Cancer scale (Mini-MAC). The study was performed on May 11-15th, 2020. Non-parametric tests and Spearman correlations were used for statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics are presented as median and interquartile range. The study was approved by the ethics committee.

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