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CN26 Patient-reported experiences of cancer care related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Switzerland: A qualitative study

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Background: Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on cancer patients may be high in terms of anxiety, fear and psychological distress; however, this topic remains under-addressed. We aim to describe cancer patient experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic in Switzerland. Information gained through in-depths interviews will be triangulated with the level of distress and resilience.

Methods: Purposive sampling will be used to recruit four patient subgroups diagnosed with melanoma, breast, lung, or colon cancer (i) under adjuvant treatment; (ii) under anti-cancer treatment with palliative intent; (iii) being consulted at institutes for complementary and integrative medicine (ICIM); (iv) being consulted by clinical nurse specialists (CNS). Interview guides were developed based on qualitative analyses of public online cancer patients’ forums from four different countries. We selected main posts related to COVID-19. Semantic and inductive thematic analysis approaches were used to identify meaningful patterns and themes. The level of distress and resilience will be measured by the NCCN Distress Thermometer and the 2-item Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale. We aim to include 120 patients (10 participants per subgroup in each language region). Recruitment will start in September 2020.

Results: The design of the study as well as preliminary data regarding themes and subthemes identified in the patient’s forum analysis will be presented.

Conclusions: To the best of our knowledge, no patient experience study with a qualitative design is conducted or planned with cancer patients during COVID-19 pandemic in Europe. The study will serve to identify concerns, unmet information and clinical needs and potential positive experiences of patients with cancer in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Newly developed patient reported measures should be based on qualitative data. The identification of topics considered important to patients will thus support the development of patient reported experience measures for the current or future epidemics/pandemics.

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CN27 Value of nurse navigators (NNs) telemonitoring for cancer patients (pts) tested positive for COVID-19

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Background: The current COVID-19 pandemic has raised a major challenge to healthcare systems. Deployment of telehealth solutions can help maintaining continuity of care. The request to stay at home particularly applied to cancer patients, who were considered at higher risk for infection and severe events. Patients had to experience substantial psychosocial implications of mass quarantine and they were also faced with special challenges to receive safe cancer care. This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of people living with cancer during mass quarantine.

Methods: The Italian Association of Cancer Nurses (AIAO) conducted an online survey from March 29th to May 3rd, 2020, which corresponds to “Phase One” of the COVID-19 Italian emergency plan. People living with cancer and self-isolated at home were invited to fill in the survey via social groups. Data about socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, opinion on the impact of SARCOV-2, access to cancer care, behavioural measures implemented, and the perception of being isolated (ISOLA scale) were collected.

Results: Participants were 195 adults living with cancer (female=76%, mean age=50.3 ± 11.2 years). They were more often affected by haematological malignancy (51.3%) and staying at home with partner and children (38.5%) for more than 4 weeks (70.8%). Only 54% of them believed to be at higher risk for SARCOV-2 infection and 51% for severe complications. Measures to prevent the infection included hand washing (95.2%), social distancing (81.5%), face mask (96.3%), gloves (55.6%), and remedies to boost their immune system (29%). Overall, 62% reported diminished/absent access to cancer care and 29% were afraid that their cancer was not under control. The mean scores of the ISOLA scale (range 1-5) were 2.64 (SD=0.81) for isolation-related suffering, 3.31 (SD=1.13) for problems in the relationship with others, and 3.14 (SD=1.06) for difficulties in the relationship with oneself. Greater social isolation in quarantine was reported by the older patients, with lower education, and living without children.

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CN29 SARS-CoV-2 and the perspectives of people living with cancer: The AIAO survey on the Italian lockdown

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Background: On March 9th, the lockdown was enforced in Italy in order to contain the spread of the SARCOV-2 pandemic. The request to stay at home particularly applied to cancer patients, who were considered at higher risk for infection and severe events. Patients had to experience substantial psychosocial implications of mass quarantine and they were also faced with special challenges to receive safe cancer care. This study aimed to investigate the perspectives of people living with cancer during mass quarantine.

Methods: The Italian Association of Cancer Nurses (AIAO) conducted an online survey from March 29th to May 3rd, 2020, which corresponds to “Phase One” of the COVID-19 Italian emergency plan. People living with cancer and self-isolated at home were invited to fill in the survey via social groups. Data about socio-demographic and clinical characteristics, opinion on the impact of SARCOV-2, access to cancer care, behavioural measures implemented, and the perception of being isolated (ISOLA scale) were collected.

Results: Overall, 116 COVID-positive pts have completed the monitoring period (median age: 58.5 years, 21-90; 56.9% female). 54.3% were monitored after hospitalization for COVID-19, 37.1% after RT-PCR screening (symptomatic pts) and 8.6% after systematic screening prior to surgery. There were no deaths or admissions to intensive care unit. 7.8% of pts were hospitalized (excluding scheduled hospitalization). NNs conducted an average of 9.9 calls per patient. Of 53 events requiring a medical opinion, 50.9% resulted in a visit to the emergency room. 41.4% of pts downloaded the CAPRI App, and completed the tracking data on average 1.1 times per day.

Conclusions: CAPRI-COVID enabled to keep the majority of pts at home, and helped to ensure secure pts’ pathways during this epidemic. NNs play an essential role in addition with the use of CAPRI App which helped limiting phone calls and focusing on the management of complex pts. Ongoing analyses are exploring actions of NNs and pts’ experience.

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