

Abstract 3714

European survey of 907 people with cancer about the importance of nutrition

Type: Abstract

Category: Public health

Authors: [M. Muscaritoli](#)¹, A. Molino¹, F. Scala², F. De Lorenzo³, K. Christoforidi⁴, I. Manneh-Vangramberen⁴; ¹Internal medicine, Sapienza University of Rome, Roma, IT, ²Strategy, Healthware, Salerno, IT, ³ECPC Board, European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC), Brussels, BE, ⁴Projects, European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC), Brussels, BE

Background

Nutritional and metabolic disorders are highly prevalent among cancer patients. We aimed to analyse the dimension of nutritional alterations among cancer patients and survivors in Europe by using a structured questionnaire encompassing the perspectives of patients and their physicians on nutritional issues.

Methods

A structured questionnaire was designed to analyse the importance of nutrition for people with cancer. The questionnaire was subdivided in specific areas of interest, such as the presence of feeding problems, perception of nutrition importance, role of food supplements, and their view of their physician's approach to nutrition. All cancer patients and survivors were eligible to answer the questionnaire, except for people diagnosed with brain and breast cancer.

The study was conducted by the European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC), Sapienza University of Rome, and Healthware International. ECPC ensured the dissemination of questionnaire to its Members in 10 countries, who translated and disseminated the questionnaire.

Results

The survey was answered by 907 cancer patients and survivors. 59.2% (n=537) of respondents were diagnosed with cancer less than 3 years ago, and 46.2% (n=419) were treated for cancer for 1 year or less (46.2%; n= 419). 82.4% of respondents (n=689) believed it was important to maintain physical activity during cancer treatment, although only 53.8% (n=450) of the respondents reported that their physicians advised them to do so. 72.9% (n=603) of the respondents didn't know the meaning of the term "cachexia", and 92.4% (n=764) did not receive any information about cachexia from their health professionals. 69.7% (n=586) of respondents reported that they lost weight after the cancer diagnosis, and for 36.7% (n=309) of respondents this loss was moderate to severe.

Conclusions

Most people with cancer surveyed reported that they would like to receive more information about how to improve their nutrition during and after treatment. There is a need to empower individual patients and patient associations by producing more information on cancer patients' nutritional needs. Such information material should be produced by patients in close collaboration with medical oncologists and other healthcare professionals.