

1

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Prevalence of depression in cancer patients – a Norwegian cross-sectional study

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2

Outline

- Background
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

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3

Background I

- Part of larger study initiated by the European Palliative Care Research Centre (PRC)
 - Prevalence and severity of pain, cachexia, fatigue and depression in severely ill patients in Mid-Norway
 - Patients with cancer, heart failure or COPD
 - In-patient and out-patient
- My semester thesis: Depression in cancer patients

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4

Background II

- Cancer common in general population, prevalence increasing
- Depression occurs frequently in cancer patients
 - Major Depressive disorder (MD), DSM/ICD
 - Great variations in prevalence rates, 3-58%
 - Associated with increased morbidity and mortality
 - Effective treatment of depression

Stiefel F, et al. Depression in palliative care: a pragmatic report from the Expert Working Group of the European Association for Palliative Care. Supportive Care in Cancer. 2001;9(7):477-88.

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5

Research questions

- What is the prevalence of depression in cancer patients in Norway?
- Is depression associated with pain, physical functioning and other patient characteristics in cancer patients in Norway?

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6

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7

Methods

- Descriptive cross-sectional study design
- Patients
 - Verified cancer diagnosis
 - Hospitals/nursing home in Mid-Norway
 - ≥18 years of age
 - No surgery last 24 hours
- Data collected
 - Set of 2 questionnaires
 - 31 questions (pain, psychiatric distress, medication, performance status)

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8

PHQ-4

Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?
(Use "✓" to indicate your answer)

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	0	1	2	3
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying	0	1	2	3
3. Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

(For office coding: Total Score T ___ = ___ + ___ + ___)

Kroenke K, et al. An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: The PHQ-4. Psychosomatics 2009;50: p. 613-21.
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9

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4. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3

(For office coding: Total Score T ___ = ___ + ___ + ___)

Recommended cut-off = 3

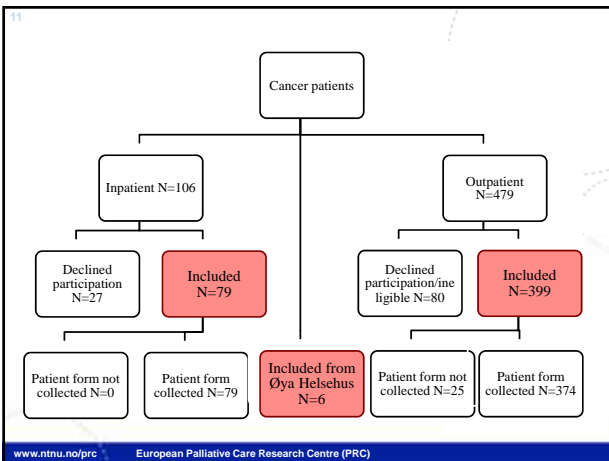
Kroenke K, et al. The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: validity of a two-item depression screener. Med Care 2003; 41
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10

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12

Study population demographics

	N (%)
Total study population	484 (100.0)
Age	
Young (<45)	48 (9.9)
Middle aged (45-65)	176 (36.4)
Old (>65)	235 (48.6)
Missing	25 (5.2)
Sex	
Male	245 (50.6)
Female	214 (44.2)
Missing	25 (5.2)
Marital status	
Solitary	111 (22.9)
Married/cohabitant	343 (70.9)
Missing	30 (6.2)
Education	
9 years	94 (19.4)
10-12 years	195 (40.3)
College/University <4 years	87 (18.0)
College/University >4 years	74 (15.3)
Missing	34 (7.0)

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13

Cancer characteristics

- Cancer of breast, gastrointestinal, haematological and urological system
- Curative: 51.2%
- Palliative: 47.8%
- Performance status group (PGS) 2/3: 21.1%

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14

Results I

- Prevalence of indication of depression 12.4%
 - Among those 11.5% had a current use of antidepressant medication
- No association with demographic values, type or stage of cancer or intention of treatment

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15

Results II

- Current pain and indication of depression
 - Associated with the presence of current pain
 - 19% vs. 9% (OR 2.52, CI 1.40-4.54)
- Performance status group and indication of depression
 - Associated with severely reduced physical functioning
 - 39.1% (PSG 3) vs. 9.9% (PSG 1) (OR 5.88, CI 2.37-14.63)

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16

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17

Discussion I

- Prevalence in line with previous research
 - Few are treated with antidepressant medication (AD)
- Association with pain
 - Consistent with earlier findings
 - Causality unclear
- Association with performance status group
 - Consistent with earlier findings
 - Only significant in PSG 3, very low number (N=27)

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18

Discussion II

- Form completion
 - Selection bias?
 - Lengthy questionnaires - missing values
- Variation in research
 - The term "depression"
 - Questionnaire vs. clinical interview

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Conclusion

- More than 1/10 had indicators of depression
 - Independent of intention of treatment
 - Only 1/10 of them treated with ADs
- Current pain and low PS associated with an increase of depression
- Need for consensus on terminology and screening of depression