

A SERVICE AUDIT OF PSYCHO - ONCOLOGY CLINIC AT NUCLEAR INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE & RADIOTHERAPY

***Qasim Jamal Chachar, Rahul Roy, Aatir H. Rajput, Moin Ahmed Ansari, Rajesh Kumar,
Shahryar, Syed Shabhat E Maryam***

Affiliation: Dept. of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences - Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences

AIM

To evaluate 6 years of psycho-oncology service at Nuclear Institute of Medicine & Radiotherapy

BACKGROUND

Cancer, and its medical/surgical treatment, lead to a broad variety of physical and psychosocial problems. These range from physical pain, fatigue, and loss of autonomous life to psychological distress and have a deep impact on quality of life. Throughout the 18th and the 19th century, physicians, oncologists and psychiatrists made note of correlations between cancer and mental health disorders. However, despite this early recognition, formal steps in this regard to address the issue were not forthcoming; until recently. The psycho-oncology clinic was established in early 2014 at Nuclear Institute of Medicine and Radiotherapy (NIMRA), Jamshoro by the Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences – Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences; in light of evidence-based literature that reported a worrisome burden of mental health issues among those afflicted with cancer (an estimated prevalence of 47%).

METHODS

This service audit (performed with due permission of all concerned authorities) hoped to evaluate the range of services the clinic was offering, the number of patients it catered to annually and the patient feedback it received. The relevant data was obtained from service records and analyzed using SPSS v. 21.0.

OUTCOMES

The audit revealed that the clinic offered free-of-cost, comprehensive care, beginning from screening for mental health conditions at every visit, establishing diagnosis and providing care via trained psychologists, psychiatrist and a cognitive behavioral therapists. Till date, the clinic had catered to the mental health needs of over 3172 patients. The records revealed that among the patients, the greatest proportion suffered from depression (36.63%). Other notable mental health conditions included anxiety disorders and adjustment disorders.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the last decade the demand for mental health interventions to treat and support patients with cancer disease and cancer survivors has dramatically increased. The psycho-oncology clinic had served as a beacon of hope for patients and the fruitful results yielded by this endeavor should encourage all such cancer treatment institutes in the country to follow suit and establish such clinics for the welfare of the patients.

Keywords: *Depression, Anxiety Disorders, Adjustment Disorders, Cancer & Psycho-Oncology.*