Cancer-Related Distress and Risk for Anxiety and Depression Among People with Lymphoma

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In blood cancers like lymphoma, patients often feel their cancer is invisible to others, and may have less contact with the healthcare team during periods of prolonged remission. Further, lymphoma patients experience levels of distress, anxiety, and depression that can impact participation in treatment or hinder treatment decision-making and health-related quality of life.

AIMS

To describe how people living with lymphoma characterize their cancer-related distress and concerns, including symptoms of anxiety and depression, and to explore associations between key distress domains and anxiety/depression risk and if associations vary by current remission status.

METHODS

200 people living with lymphoma (patients and survivors) enrolled in Cancer Support Community’s online Cancer Experience Registry from 2015-2021 and completed CancerSupportSource™, a 25-item validated distress screening tool (CSS-25) in which participants rate their level of concern (0 to 4) across five domains plus one item examining concerns about tobacco and substance use: (1) Emotional well-being (8 items; including 2-item anxiety and depression risk scales) (2) Symptom burden and impact (8 items) (3) Body image and healthy lifestyle (4 items) (4) Healthcare team communication (2 items) (5) Relationships and intimacy (2 items)

The average item rating for each domain was calculated. Depression and anxiety risk scores were calculated separately as per CSS scoring instructions; participants were considered at risk for depression or anxiety if subscale scores were ≥ 3.

RESULTS

Greater Concerns Associated with Higher Anxiety and Depression Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th>At Risk for Anxiety</th>
<th>At Risk for Depression</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symptom burden and impact</td>
<td>4.25*</td>
<td>1.92-9.44</td>
<td>7.56*</td>
<td>2.90-19.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare team communication</td>
<td>3.24*</td>
<td>1.54-8.81</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.81-3.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships and intimacy</td>
<td>1.86*</td>
<td>1.07-3.22</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>0.57-3.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body image and healthy lifestyle</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.73-2.34</td>
<td>2.37*</td>
<td>1.19-4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Note: CI-confidence interval, adjusted for age, income, employment status, cancer remission status, and if associations vary by current remission status. *p<.05

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

• In addition to symptom burden and impact, key patient concerns, including health care team communication, relationships and intimacy, and body image and healthy lifestyle are important considerations in understanding risk for anxiety and depression among lymphoma patients and survivors.
• Routine multidimensional distress screening and follow-up, including risk assessment for both anxiety and depression, can help to identify specific cancer-related concerns and triage patients to tailored care.
• Future research should examine barriers to accessing care for emotional and mental health concerns among lymphoma patients and survivors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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REFERENCES

10 Contact: Melissa F. Miller, PhD, MPH, melissa@cancersupportcommunity.org

The Cancer Experience Registry

Cancer Experience Registry is a free online registry that helps cancer patients and caregivers connect with one another, share information, and find support. More than 40,000 patients and caregivers have joined the registry since it launched in 2015.

American Society of Hematology (ASH) New Orleans, Louisiana, December 10-13, 2022 Contact: Melissa F. Miller, PhD, MPH, melissa@cancersupportcommunity.org