

Identifying the palliative care needs of patients and families in gynecologic surgical oncology

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Patients undergoing oncology-related gynecologic surgical procedures experience substantial symptom burden and distress. Support from specialist palliative care teams may benefit these patients and their families; however, an evidence-informed approach to the integration of palliative care and gynecologic oncology is needed. To inform such an approach, a scoping review synthesizing current evidence on the palliative care needs of patients and families in gynecologic surgical oncology was performed.

METHODS: Reviewers performed a structured search of online databases CINAHL, Scopus, PsycINFO, MEDLINE, and PubMed in addition to the grey literature to identify relevant studies published between 2011 and June 11th, 2021. The original search identified 993 articles, which were dually screened for study inclusion, resulting in a final sample of articles from which data were systematically extracted and synthesized.

RESULTS: This review of 59 publications predominantly consisted of European studies (n=26, 44.1%), described quantitative study methods (n=47, 79.6%), followed an observational study design (n=49, 83.1%), and focused on psychological impact of treatment as a major topic of study (n=21, 35.6%). The dataset also described sexual function of women post treatment (n= 15, 25.4%), quality of life (n=10, 16.9%), therapeutic decision making (n= 9, 15.2%), pain assessment (n=2, n=3.6%), and medication for symptom management (n=2, 3.6%). Explicit discussion of specialist palliative care involvement was rare.

CONCLUSION: The needs of patients and families in gynecologic surgical oncology are well-suited to palliative care collaboration; however, the body of literature on palliative care services provided to this unique population is underdeveloped.