

Anxiety and Depression Associated With Burden in Caregivers of Patients With Brain Metastases

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Saria, Evangelista, Carter, Nyamathi, Phillips, Piccioni, Kesari, and Maliski contributed to the conceptualization and design. Saria, Carter, MacManus, Gorman, Piccioni, and Kesari completed the data collection. Saria and Courchesne provided statistical support. Saria, Phillips, and Maliski provided the analysis. Saria, Evangelista, MacManus, Gorman, Phillips, Piccioni, Kesari, and Maliski contributed to the manuscript preparation.

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Purpose/Objectives: To describe and examine the relationship between caregiver burden and the affective disorders anxiety and depression in caregivers of patients with brain metastases.

Design: Cross-sectional, descriptive, correlational.

Setting: Moores Cancer Center at the University of California, San Diego.

Sample: 56 family caregivers of patients with brain metastases from solid tumors at other primary sites.

Methods: Self-administered survey.

Main Research Variables: Caregiver burden, anxiety, and depression.

Findings: With the exception of caregiver esteem, no statistically significant relationships were noted between impact on schedule, a dimension of caregiver burden, and screening positive for affective disorders.

Conclusions: Findings from this study support previous reports indicating that the odds of having anxiety and depressive symptoms are greater in family caregivers who report higher levels of caregiver burden.

Implications for Nursing: The identification and management of caregiver burden are important considerations for a comprehensive cancer care program. Addressing the needs of the cancer caregiver, who is at heightened risk for various psychological, physical, financial, and social problems, is increasingly vital.

Brain metastases are diagnosed in 20%–40% of all patients with cancer, and the incidence continues to rise with the increasing number of long-term survivors (Schmieder, Keilholz, & Combs, 2016). Brain metastases are the most common intracranial tumors, and the annual incidence of brain metastases is more than 10 times greater than that of primary brain tumors. Although methodologic limitations are inherent in all studies on the incidence of brain metastases, current estimates in the United States suggest an incidence rate of about 10 per 100,000, with incidence ranging from 21,000–43,000 patients diagnosed per year to more than 100,000 patients when autopsy and clinical data are taken into consideration (Stelzer, 2013).

Family caregivers provide long-term care and are often the primary source of physical, social, and emotional support for patients. A caregiver is an unpaid individual who provides direct care to relatives or friends who are unable to provide for themselves (Hunt, 2003). Depending on their responsibilities, caregivers