Distress and Supportive Care Needs of Ethnically Diverse Older Adults With Advanced or Recurrent Cancer

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OBJECTIVES: To assess the prevalence of supportive care needs (SCNs) and distress and to describe relationships among these and patient characteristics for ethnically diverse older adults with advanced or recurrent cancer.

SAMPLE & SETTING: Cross-sectional survey in five outpatient oncology clinics in an urban academic medical center involving 100 participants receiving cancer care in an economically challenged community.

METHODS & VARIABLES: The supportive care framework for cancer care guided this study, and participants completed the SCN Survey Short Form 34 and the Distress Thermometer. Study variables are cancer diagnosis, gender, helping to raise children, number of comorbid diseases, race or ethnicity, treatment status, and zip code.

RESULTS: Clinically meaningful distress was found in about a third of patients. Distress was not affected by race or ethnicity. Many ethnically diverse older patients with advanced or recurrent cancer report distress and SCNs; those with high distress are more likely to report multiple SCNs.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: Nursing assessment of patient SCNs and distress is integral to establishing individualized patient-centered care plans and to delivering optimal care.

KEYWORDS distress; supportive care needs; older adults; advanced cancer; recurrent cancer

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