CANCER CACHEXIA STAGES: DO THEY PREDICT QUALITY OF LIFE?

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INTRODUCTION

- Cancer cachexia is associated with decreased quality of life (QoL) in advanced cancer patients.
- It is unclear whether cancer cachexia stages (CCS) will predict differences in commonly used QoL measures.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the association between CCS and two commonly used measures of QoL:
 - Wellbeing on the Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS)
 - The Distress Thermometer (DT)

METHODS

- Five hundred and twelve patients who took part in a Cancer Rehabilitation Program at the McGill University Health Centre (Montreal, Quebec) were classified into the following CCS stages:
 - Non-cachexia
 - Pre-cachexia
 - Cachexia
 - Refractory cachexia
- Criteria to determine CCS is shown in Figure 1.
- All patients filled out the ESAS and DT questionnaires. A score ≥ 4 indicates a level of distress or lack of wellbeing requiring intervention.
- Mixed model ANOVA was used to determine differences in wellbeing and distress among the CCS stages.

Figure 1: CCS classification system

RESULTS

PATIENT CHARACTERISTICS

		n	%
CCS	Non-cachexia	172	33.6
	Pre-cachexia	115	22.5
	Cachexia	154	30.1
	Refractory cachexia	71	13.9

		n	%
Diagnosis	Lung	123	24.0
	GI	81	15.8
	Pancreatic	60	11.7
	Other	248	48.5

	mean	SD
Age (years)	62.1	13.5
	n	%
Male	257	50.2
Metastatic disease	295	57.6

Relationship between wellbeing and cachexia stage

Mixed model ANOVA controlled for age, sex, diagnosis, current treatment, metastatic disease. Data reported as mean $\pm$ standard deviation. * denotes significance $p < 0.05$.

Relationship between distress and cachexia stage

Mixed model ANOVA controlled for age, sex, diagnosis, current treatment, metastatic disease. Data reported as mean $\pm$ standard deviation. *,** denotes significance $p < 0.05$.

CONCLUSION

- Patients in the most severe stage of cachexia exhibit significantly greater distress and less wellbeing than those in other cachexia stages.
- Comfort care measures should be of primary importance in refractory cachexia patients.