ASSESSMENT OF SYMPTOM BURDEN AMONG PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH MULTIPLE MYELOMA (MM) ADMITTED TO RECEIVE CHEMOTHERAPY AT THE INSTITUTE FOR ONCOLOGY AND RADIOLOGY OF SERBIA (IORS)

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Background

Patients with Multiple Myeloma represent a vulnerable population of patients who may experience a range of symptoms induced by cancer or its treatment. The data describing the incidence and severity of symptoms before, during and after chemotherapy are lacking. Better description of symptom burden will enable individual, symptom-based tailoring of anti-cancer treatment. Better patient education to report symptoms leads to better symptom management, and improvement in quality of life.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to assess the symptom burden using the Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS) in patients with MM, who were scheduled to receive first cycle of chemotherapy at the IORS.

Materials & Methods

ESAS questionnaire (Edmonton system assessment scale) is designed to assist in the assessment of the most frequent symptoms in patients with advanced cancer, namely: pain, tiredness, nausea, depression, anxiety, drowsiness, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, overall well-being. The severity at the time of assessment of each symptom is rated from 0 to 10 on a numerical scale; with 0 meaning that the symptom is absent and 10 that it is the worst possible severity. ESAS was used to assess symptoms in patients with MM who were admitted to start chemotherapy at the IORS for the first time. Descriptive statistics methods were used to analyze collected data.

Results

ESAS records were collected from 20 patients (11 male and 9 female) with the median age of 63 years (range 41-80).

Conclusion

Hospitalized patients with MM experience substantial physical and psychological symptoms. There is a concerning proportion of reported depression and anxiety. Our data demonstrate the need for efforts to alleviate the physical symptoms experienced by this population, while also seeking to understand and address their psychological needs. Our research supports use of ESAS as a useful, easy and not time-consuming screening tool for symptom burden. Further research will be conducted in order to examine the impact of ESAS in treatment decision-making process.

References

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