

# Psychosocial Factors Associated with Quality of Life of Patients with Cancer in Southern Sri Lanka

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**Background:** Cancer is the second leading cause of death worldwide following heart disease; it is a stressful event that may profoundly affect the physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual health of the patients and such health issues can change the quality of life (QoL). It is observed that psychosocial factors impair cancer patients' QoL, comfort level and treatment compliance, which can affect survival.

**Objective:** The main objective of this study was to examine psychosocial factors associated with QoL of patients with cancer treated at the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya, Galle.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted with a sample of 400 cancer patients treated in the Oncology ward. Data were collected after ethical clearance using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Scales were used to assess psychological distress (PD), depressive symptoms (DS), family support (FS), religious support (RS), coping strategies and QoL of the cancer patients.

**Results:** The mean age was 56 years (range 25-88). The most common cancer type was Breast cancer (24%). The higher prevalence of PD (66%) and a lower prevalence of DS (9%) were reported. FS was the most prominent support system and the majority was used adaptive coping methods. The social QoL was considerably low. FS and PD were the most significant associated factors of QoL.

**Conclusions:** The psychosocial status of cancer patients had impacted their QoL. Psychological distress seems to be major issue rather than their depressive symptoms. Although they had obtained satisfied family support; social QoL was at a lower level. Formal and low-cost psychosocial support services should be provided for needy patients to improve their QoL.

**Keywords:** Quality of life, Cancer, Distress, Depression, Support, Sri Lanka