Impact of Hearing and Visual Impairment in Older Adults with Cancer


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Background

- Visual and hearing impairment are common in older adults, and are associated with a higher incidence of depression, social isolation, functional decline, and cognitive deficits.
- Dual impairment (impaired vision and hearing) is associated with poorer survival in community-dwelling older adults.

Objectives

1. To describe the prevalence of visual and hearing impairment among older adults with cancer.
2. To study the association between hearing, visual, and dual impairment and the patient’s physical function, psychological status, and cognition.

Methods

- Secondary analysis of two prospective studies of patients age 65+ with cancer starting a new chemotherapy regimen (Figure 1).
- All participants underwent a geriatric assessment (Hurria et al., JCO 2011).

Results

- 750 patients included were older than age 65 with cancer starting a new chemotherapy regimen (Figure 1).
- Table 1 presents patient characteristics and impairments.
- Table 2 shows patient characteristics associated with visual and/or hearing impairments.
- Table 3 presents impairments and functional status.

Conclusions

- Almost 40% of older adults with cancer report at least one sensory impairment, with 7% reporting both visual and hearing impairment.
- Older patients with cancer and sensory impairments are more likely to report functional, cognitive, and psychological deficits.
- Older patients with hearing or visual impairment should be evaluated using a geriatric assessment.
- The effect of interventions aimed at improving visual and hearing impairments on the outcomes of older patients with cancer should be evaluated.