

Pain Management among Cancer Patient: A Short Review

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Abstract

In India, cancer is becoming a more serious health issue that affects people from all socio-economic backgrounds and geographical areas. The number of cancer cases recorded each year is rising, contributing to the rising cancer burden in the nation. Pain is frequently reported during cancer disease and it still remains poorly controlled in 40% of patients.¹ Major progress in the field includes the recent development of a chronic cancer pain taxonomy now included in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) and the update of the WHO analgesic ladder.²

Keywords: Cancer; Pain; Malignant; Tumor.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the result of certain body cells multiplying uncontrollably and invading other body parts. With its trillions of cells, the human body can develop cancer almost anywhere. Normally, human cells divide to create new cells when the body needs them. The cells are proliferating and expanding during this phase. When this occurs, damaged or old cells perish and are replaced by young ones. Malignant tumours have the ability to metastasise, or spread, into nearby tissues. They can also produce new tumours by migrating to distant parts of the body. Where as benign tumours do not invade or disseminate into nearby tissues. After removal,

benign tumours seldom grow back, while malignant ones occasionally do.³ Cancer Pain is a major worry for both long-term cancer survivors and cancer patients undergoing active therapy. It is one of the most dreaded effects of cancer and can seriously lower one's quality of life. Cancer patients frequently have untreated or inadequately treated pain and there is little indication that this has changed recently.⁴ In India, one in nine people are predicted to receive a cancer diagnosis at some point in their lives.⁵ Interestingly, breast cancer was the most common cancer in women and lung cancer the most common in men. Lymphoid leukaemia was found to be the most common type of paediatric cancer (0-14 years old), affecting 29.2% of boys and 24.2% of girls. It is anticipated that the incidence of cancer will rise by 12.8% by 2025 compared to 2020.⁶

Types of Cancer

Some categories of cancers that begin in specific types of cells:

Carcinoma

Carcinoma is the type of cancer that is most common. Their creation is attributed to epithelial cells, which cover both the interior and outer surfaces of the body. There are many different types of epithelial cells, which often look like columns under a microscope.⁷

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Sarcoma

Cancers known as sarcomas can develop in the soft tissues of the bone, such as the muscles, fat, blood and lymph arteries, as well as fibrous tissue (such as ligaments and tendons). The most frequent cancer of the bone is osteosarcoma. Lipopolysarcoma, Kaposi sarcoma, liposarcoma, malignant fibrous histiocytoma and dermatofibrosarcoma protuberans are the most prevalent forms of soft tissue sarcoma.⁸

Leukemia

Leukaemias are cancers that originate in the bone marrow's blood-forming tissue. The bone marrow and blood become overpopulated with abnormal white blood cells, known as leukaemia cells and leukemic blast cells, which eventually wipe out healthy blood cells.⁹

Lymphoma

Cancer that starts in lymphocytes is known as lymphoblasts (T cells or B cells). Abnormal lymphocytes accumulate in lymph nodes, lymph arteries and other bodily organs in lymphoma.¹⁰

Multiple Myeloma

Myeloma cells, which are aberrant plasma cells, accumulate in the bone marrow and develop into tumours in bones throughout the body.¹¹

Melanoma

Cancer that starts in cells that develop into melanocytes, which are specialised cells that produce melanin, the pigment responsible for the colour of skin, is known as melanoma. Although melanomas most commonly occur on the skin, they can also develop in other pigmented tissues, such as the eye.¹²

Cancer pain

Cancer affects a large number of people and as the population ages, so does its prevalence. According to a recent systematic analysis that included research from 2014 to 2021, 44% of cancer patients reported having discomfort overall. 31% of the patients reported having moderate to severe pain. It's also important to remember that other cancer therapies frequently take precedence over pain management, exacerbating the suffering patients are experiencing.

Strategies to Manage cancer Pain

Over-the-counter pain relievers: A few examples are ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, aspirin and acetaminophen Tylenol, etc.).

- **Medications derived from opium (opioids).** Opioids are prescription medications used to treat moderate to severe pain. Examples of opioids include morphine (Kadian, Ms Contin, others) and oxycodone (Oxycontin, Roxicodone, others).
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Procedures to block pain signals One method of preventing pain signals from reaching the brain is to perform a nerve block treatment. A numbing agent is injected into or around a nerve during this process.

Integrative therapies: Acupuncture, massage, physical therapy, meditation and hypnosis are among the pain-relieving techniques used by some people.¹³

Removal or Reduction of the Cancer

The underlying cancer may be completely eradicated from the body via surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy and immunological therapy. This has the potential to significantly reduce discomfort. Furthermore, tumours can be destroyed non-surgically with innovative less invasive treatments.

Palliative Surgery or Radiation Therapy

Palliative care can also encompass the use of radiation therapy and surgery. In other words, the purpose of the procedure is to lessen pain and other symptoms so that those with cancer can continue to live fulfilling lives. Surgery may be done to stop or manage cancer-related consequences that hurt. Bowel blockage, compression of the spinal cord or peripheral nerves and organ compression are a few of them. Comfort is the main goal of radiation therapy and palliative surgery. People with advanced cancer are the main target audience for them.

Epidural and Intrathecal Pumps

The most effective treatment for pain that is localised is nerve blocking. This usually affects one or two particular nerves. Epidural or intrathecal pumps can be used to block pain signals in cases of more diffuse pain. "Epidural" describes the region immediately outside the outer membrane of the spinal cord. The term "intrathecal" describes the area between the spinal cord's sheaths.) These pumps continually provide medication to large

areas under the skin or are carried in a pouch. Better pain relief with fewer side effects can result from this for a lot of folks.¹⁴

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