

Abstract:

THE NEW NORMAL; SEXUAL FUNCTION AFTER OVARIAN CANCER FOR SURVIVORS AND PARTNERS COMPARED TO NORMDATA

Aims

Because of the lack of quantitative data on sexual function after ovarian cancer, both for survivors and their partners, it is difficult to counsel patients on expected effects. We hypothesized that ovarian cancer may cause sexual problems, not only for survivors, but also for partners. The purpose of this study is to compare sexual function after ovarian cancer for survivors and partners with normdata in age-matched controls.

Method

After an average of six years after their primary treatment, patients with ovarian cancer (n=275) and their partners (n=137) conducted surveys for HR - QoL and sexual function with the EORTC-QLQC30 and OV-28. Normdata for age-matched controls were gathered through the PROFILES-registry. Scores on the questionnaires were linearly transformed. Differences between the groups were compared and correlations were calculated.

Results

Sexual function showed a non-normal distribution. Median level of sexual function of survivors was 83 (minimum 17 – maximum 100). Hundred (36%) of 275 survivors had undisturbed sexual function. For partners, the median level of sexual function was 43 (0-100) with only 2 persons reported undisturbed function and 21 with a score of 0. Normdata showed a median sexual function for female age-matched controls 17 (0-100) and for male age-matched controls 50 (0-100). Sexual function between survivors and partners correlated strongly (Spearman's rho .617, p<0.01).

Conclusion

An effect on sexual function for survivors of ovarian cancer is present in the majority of cases. However when compared to age-matched controls, the effect seems limited. Further exploration of sexual function in ovarian cancer survivors is warranted.

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