Erectile dysfunction among male lymphoma survivors in a developing country

G.G. Gan1, D.L.C. Ng2, Y.C. Leong1
1Medical, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2Medical, University Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

Background: Although erectile dysfunction (ED) is one of the known long-term complications among male cancer survivors, it is not commonly reported particularly in South East Asian region. This study aims to determine the prevalence of ED in lymphoma survivors in Malaysia and to determine its association with anxiety and depression, and its effects on patients’ quality of life (QOL).

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study conducted in an outpatient haematology clinic at a tertiary hospital in Malaysia. Patients were all male lymphoma survivors who were age 18 years old and above. The International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF-5) Questionnaire were used to screen for ED. Hospital Anxiety and Depression Score (HADS) questionnaire were used to assess for anxiety and depression. Quality of life were assessed using EORTC QLQ-C30. Bio-demographic data was analysed using descriptive analysis. The association of ED with the bio-demographics was assessed using Chi square test. The correlation between ED and anxiety/depression scores and QOL scores were measured using Pearson correlation. P value of < 0.05 is statistically significant.

Results: A total of 106 male patients were recruited (response rate of 79.6%). The mean age of the participants was 55.7 years old (range from 18-85 years). More than half (61%) of the patients were above 50 years old and 50.7% had other comorbidities. Thirty-five percent of patients were not sexually active at the time of interview and the most common reason provided were ‘feeling too tired’ (48.1%). Among those who were sexually active patients, 81.7% reported presence of ED. However, 4.2% had severe ED. The prevalence of ED among younger age group (< 40 years old) was 61.5%. Age was the only factor found to be associated with ED and the severity of ED increased with age (p value = 0.002). There was no association between ED with symptoms of anxiety or depression. Quality of life was also not found to be significantly associated with ED.

Conclusions: ED is more prevalent in the older population and this is consistent with many studies. However, the relatively high prevalence of ED in younger patients is of concern. This should remind the treating clinicians to be more mindful of the sexual dysfunction of these groups of patients and perhaps intervention may offer some help.

Legal entity responsible for the study: University Malaya.
Funding: University Malaya.
Disclosure: All authors have declared no conflicts of interest.