

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE OF PATIENTS WITH CANCER

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ABSTRACT

People with brain tumours can experience a range of symptoms and disabilities, such as psychological problems, difficulties with mobility or self care, and relationship and work issues, which can substantially impact their quality of life. These symptoms and disabilities may be addressed through 'multidisciplinary rehabilitation' delivered by a team of different healthcare professionals such as doctors, nurses and therapists working in an organized manner. Recognition is growing that psychosocial care is an essential component of the comprehensive care of people diagnosed with cancer. In addition to attempting to extend survival rates in people following a cancer diagnosis, the oncology community is recognizing the value of quality of life. Psychosocial care, with its goals of relieving emotional distress and promoting wellbeing, is central to efforts to improve quality of life. Individual therapy often takes the form of crisis intervention dealing with present problems or issues. Coping with changes in lifestyle, financial status, role functions, and concerns about death must be managed. Issues of dependency, disfigurement, and disability also can be addressed in therapy. Supportive techniques include gaining an understanding of the patient's prior coping abilities and determining how they can be strengthened to help the patient regain a sense of self-worth and control. Other types of therapies, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, and even psychoanalysis, may be useful for patients, depending on their level of functioning and personality.

Key words: cerebral cancer, patient, psychotherapy, caregiver