PEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY

Aggressive treatment of osteosarcoma improves health-related quality of life

Osteosarcoma is the most common bone malignancy in children. Advances in the treatment of this malignancy have improved survival rates for patients. Incorporating health-related quality of life (HRQOL) assessment into treatment for patients with osteosarcoma might improve patient and family relationships with physicians and facilitate therapy. A prospective study assessed the effect of treatment on HRQOL at the time of diagnosis, during and after therapy in patients with osteosarcoma. The researchers also investigated whether differences in HRQOL ratings were associated with differences in sex and age, and compared differences in HRQOL reports from patients and parents.

Patients with newly diagnosed, nonmetastatic osteosarcoma ($n = 66$, median age of 13.4 years) received 12 cycles of chemotherapy every 3 weeks for a total of 35 weeks, with surgery

performed after the fourth cycle of chemotherapy. All patients and 67 parents completed 1–3 HRQOL instruments at diagnosis, before surgery (week 12), at the eighth cycle of chemotherapy (week 23), and after completion of therapy at a median of 20 weeks after the last cycle of chemotherapy.

“...results ... showed an improvement in HRQOL during aggressive treatment...”

Significant improvements were observed in most HRQOL scores; however, exacerbation of nausea was reported both by patients and parents from diagnosis to weeks 12 and 23. Symptom distress decreased in 81% of patients from diagnosis to week 12 and in 64% of patients from diagnosis to week 23. No sex-related differences, and only a few

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age-related differences, were observed in scores. Moreover, scores from parents and patients were in good agreement.

In conclusion, results from this study showed an improvement in HRQOL during aggressive treatment of patients with nonmetastatic osteosarcoma, with the exception of nausea. “Clinicians can use these findings to help prepare patients and parents for the treatment experience,” conclude the researchers.

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