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Sensory aspects of cancer pain and their association with quality of life of patients with cancer pain: A descriptive cross sectional study

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Background: Cancer pain is an unpleasant experience affecting individuals, functionally and psychosocially. Holistic assessment is therefore considered for satisfactory control of cancer pain. The Short Form Brief Pain Inventory (SF BPI) is a globally used validated tool for assessment of cancer pain. Translated and validated Sinhala version is available in Sri Lanka.

Objective: To determine sensory aspects of cancer pain and their association with quality of life of patients with cancer pain.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out at Apeksha Hospital, Maharagama among patients ($n=384$; 18-80 years) with all types of cancer-related pain of at least a month or longer duration. Patients with psychological instability and/or with primary cancers or metastases in the brain were excluded. Sensory (0-10; no pain to worst pain) and reactive items of pain (0-10; does not interfere to completely interfere) were measured on a numerical rating scale using SF BPI Sinhala version. Descriptive analysis was done for demographic, sensory and reactive data. The strength of relationship between sensory and

reactive variables was tested using Spearman correlation.

Results: Mean age of the participants was 56 years (SD \pm 11.8) and, the majority were females ($n=231$; 60.2%). Means of pain scores in the last 24 hours were analyzed; worst pain 7.9 (SD \pm 1.9); least pain 0.72 (SD \pm 1.3); average pain 4.6 (SD \pm 1.5); pain now 2.5 (SD \pm 2.3). Mean of the interference items was 5.4 (SD \pm 2.0). Statistically significant ($p<0.001$) moderate to weak relationship between sensory and reactive variables were noted for relationship with other people ($r=0.380$), sleep ($r=0.398$), normal work ($r=0.293$), general activities ($r=0.261$), mood ($r=0.251$) and walking ability ($r=0.211$).

Conclusions: Despite variation in the intensity of cancer pain felt over 24 hours, a significant weak to moderate association with the quality of life was noted.

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