

Psychological assessment of women on an early breast screening program after radiotherapy to the chest wall for childhood cancer

Carlo Alfredo Clerici^{1,5}, Franca Fossati-Bellani¹, Paolo Lepera^{1,2}, Massimiliano Gennaro², Silvana Bergonzi³, Cristina Meazza¹, Marta Podda¹, Lorenza Gandola⁴, Laura Veneroni⁵, Michela Casanova¹, Graziella Cefalo¹, Andrea Ferrari¹, Roberto Luksch¹, Maura Massimino¹, Daniela Polastri¹, Filippo Spreafico¹, and Monica Terenziani¹

¹Pediatric Oncology Unit, ²Breast Surgery Unit, ³Diagnostic Radiology Unit, and ⁴Radiotherapy Unit, Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Milan; ⁵Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Milan, Milan, Italy

ABSTRACT

Aims and background. This study investigates the psychological status in a population of female patients who received chest irradiation for a childhood cancer and were screened for second primary breast cancer.

Methods. Sixty-eight consecutive such young women were included. Compilation of the Crown-Crisp Index questionnaire was requested and 49/68 patients accepted to fill it in; 14 women in the sample had children (28%).

Results. Twenty-seven of 49 patients achieved a normal score, whereas in 22 the score was slightly above the normal range in at least one scale. Pathological scores were more frequent among the women without children.

Conclusions. Quality of life in this series of long-term survivors does not seem to be severely affected by previous treatment for cancer nor by the concern for the onset of a second primary malignancy.

Key words: psychosocial, quality of life, late effects of cancer treatment, pediatric oncology.

Correspondence to: Monica Terenziani, MD, Pediatric Oncology Unit, Fondazione IRCCS Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori, Via Venezian 1, 20133 Milan, Italy.
Tel +39-02-23903117;
fax +39-02-23902648;
e-mail
monica.terenziani@istitutotumori.mi.it

Received November 5, 2007;
accepted February 8, 2008.