Metastatic Lung Cancer and Distress

Use of the Distress Thermometer for patient assessment

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BACKGROUND: Patients with metastatic lung cancer experience high levels of distress related to their disease trajectory and treatment. Oncology nurses are experts in patient care and symptom management, giving them an opportunity to screen and treat patients’ distress.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this study were to screen patients for distress and manage their symptoms to positively affect their quality of life, treatment adherence, and clinical outcomes, and to reduce healthcare costs.

METHODS: This quality improvement project was conducted to pilot the Distress Thermometer (DT) into the care of patients with thoracic cancer and to evaluate the effect of a multifaceted intervention, consisting of a patient education pamphlet and a nurse coaching call, on distress levels.

FINDINGS: Severe distress was reported in more than half the patients. A paired-sample t test revealed a significant decrease in distress scores following the intervention.

KEYWORDS
screening; metastatic lung cancer; nurse coaching; Distress Thermometer

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