

HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE (HRQL) IMPACT OF DIFFERENTIATED THYROID CANCER (DTC) ON PATIENTS AT DIFFERENT TREATMENT PHASES: DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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Background/Purpose: Although there is generally a good prognosis for DTC, patients have reported more health effects than other cancer survivors and there is little published research on the experience of DTC patients refractory to radio-iodine (RAI) treatment. This study aimed to explore the impact of DTC on HRQL at different treatment phases and to develop a conceptual model of key impacts.

Methods: Qualitative research (focus groups and individual interviews) was conducted with DTC patients attending the Thyroid Cancer Survivors' Conference in 2012. Patients were screened for eligibility and current treatment phase (recent RAI treatment, disease free, recurring/persistent, RAI refractory). Focus groups were conducted by treatment phase. Audio recordings of group/individual interviews were transcribed and thematically analyzed. The thematic coding framework developed was used to compare experiences between treatment phases and to develop the conceptual model.

Results: Eight focus groups and 11 individual interviews were conducted with a total of 52 DTC patients (n=14 RAI refractory). Patient experience of emotional and cognitive functioning impact from DTC and ongoing and previous DTC treatments was reported across treatment phases. However, impact on daily activities, mobility, and energy levels was greatest for recurring/persistent or RAI-refractory DTC patients.

Discussion & Conclusion: DTC and DTC treatments have wide-ranging negative impacts on patients' HRQL, which is important to consider in clinical practice and in development of new treatments. The conceptual model developed here identifies important patient concerns and provides a basis for evaluating the potential content validity of existing HRQL measures and for guiding development of new measures.

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