

EMOTIONAL DISTRESS, QUALITY OF LIFE AND PERSONAL GROWTH IN YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER

S. Monteiro¹, R. Morgadinho¹, A. Torres¹, A. Pereira²

¹University of Aveiro, ²Department of Education, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

Introduction: Adolescents and young adults are an understudied and often a misrepresented population in oncology research and practice.

Objectives: The current study was designed to assess the impact of cancer on a sample of Portuguese young adults with cancer, regarding emotional distress, quality of life (QOL) and personal growth.

Aims: The specific aims of the present work are 1) to assess current emotional distress, QOL and personal growth of young adults with cancer, which are compared to those of a group of healthy controls, and 2) to assess current emotional distress, QOL and personal growth of young adults with cancer according to treatment status (patients or off treatment survivors).

Methods: A sample of 36 Portuguese young adults with cancer and 435 healthy controls was evaluated through four instruments: Socio-demographic and clinical questionnaire, Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core-30 (EORTC QLQ-C30), and Personal Growth Subscale (PG) from the Psychological Well Being Scale.

Results: Cancer patients scored lower than controls in the role, cognitive and social domains of QOL and in personal growth. Cancer patients scored lower than cancer survivors in the role domain of QOL and personal growth.

Conclusions: The cancer patients revealed QOL and personal growth difficulties, mainly those undergoing treatment. These issues need to be considered in the psychosocial intervention within adolescents and young adults' oncology care.