

<https://doi.org/10.15407/exp-oncology.2024.04.279>

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN CANCER PATIENTS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

During the “golden” autumn and traditional “parade” of scientific forums in Kyiv, despite the current challenges caused by the ongoing military aggression, on October 3–4, 2024, at the initiative of R.E. Kavetsky Institute of Experimental Pathology, Oncology and Radiobiology of the NAS of Ukraine, the SI “S.P. Grigoriev Institute of Medical Radiology and Oncology” of the NAMS of Ukraine, and the PO “Ukrainian Society of Cancer Researchers”, a scientific and practical conference with international participation “Assessment of Quality of Life of Cancer Patients Covered in Experimental and Clinical Oncology Publications: Challenges and Opportunities” was held. In these extremely difficult times for our state and the world order as a whole, scientists, clinical oncologists, patients’ organizations, and leading experts in the fields of demography, legislation, economics, and law gathered with the hope of initiating the development of a joint model for reducing human suffering.

Understanding the problems of quality of life (QoL) of people with disabilities has always been and remains a sign of high humanism.

The emphasis on the specified topic of the conference is caused by the insufficient attention of both specialists and society as a whole to the problems and needs of cancer patients and their

families against the background of increasing risks that significantly affect the indicators of QoL of a person. The definition of QoL covers all spheres of human activity that are reflected in the parameters of a comfortable human life. As it turned out, according to the analysis of PubMed, the assessment of QoL of cancer patients remains outside the attention of specialists: it is absent or taken into account only partially in over 72% of large clinical studies.

As known, QoL is a multifactorial economic and philosophical category that is constantly evolving and characterizes the material and spiritual comfort of human existence. By the definition of WHO, QoL is a person’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns. The development of cancer is the main trigger for worsening QoL. It is believed that QoL is the second determining criterion after the survival rate when choosing a patient’s treatment tactics.

Cancer diagnosis is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to ensure a decent QoL of patients.

A current model of measuring QoL should be based on the principles of fundamental knowledge,

Citation: Chekhun V. Assessment of quality of life in cancer patients: challenges and opportunities. *Exp Oncol*. 2024; 46(4): 279-280. <https://doi.org/10.15407/exp-oncology.2024.04.279>

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an interdisciplinary approach, best clinical practice, and the patient's life experience.

Creating a unique cluster with a wide potential range of stakeholders can be the key to a successful formula for measuring QoL of patients and their families. An interdisciplinary algorithm of the efforts by specialists with a wealth of fundamental knowledge and experience of the thorny path of implementing innovative technologies gives a chance to develop common routes and consolidate them into productive solutions.

The conference became an interactive platform for professional discussions and exchange of experience in the approaches to the development of modern strategies for diagnosis, treatment, medical rehabilitation, and social and psychological adaptation of cancer patients. Of particular note is the search for the ways of the professional convergence of medical professionals, scientists, demographers, economists, lawyers, and patient organizations to confront the current challenges of one of the most complex medical, biological, and socio-economic problems in the field of health-care — oncology.

The analysis of the literature data showed that the problem of QoL requires a change in the current paradigm of existing clinical practice. The identified challenges create opportunities for the accelerated implementation of the principles of precision medicine as a key to a positive solution to urgent QoL problems.

Omic technologies are a modern window of opportunity to implement the principles of personalized medicine. Innovative technologies within the framework of a transdisciplinary format will allow us to find non-standard but well-considered scientific and methodological, clinical, socio-economic, regulatory, and legal solutions and opportunities to improve the QoL of cancer patients.

A particularly interesting layer of problems presented at the conference is dedicated to the transformation of QoL in conditions of military aggression, which creates additional challenges for ensuring the socio-economic and economic-legal needs of cancer patients. By coincidence, the

additional risks and opportunities are associated with the simultaneous reform of the medical field of Ukraine. In such conditions, it is important to ensure and maximally harmonize the mechanisms of the right and access of patient organizations to information about modern medicines and conditions for the physical and psychological rehabilitation of patients.

In Law of Ukraine “Fundamentals of the Legislation of Ukraine on Health Care”, the legislators operated with the concept of QoL that is related to the health of the population as a whole. During the active phase of medical reforming, ongoing since 2022, the current legislation has established mechanisms for assessing the QoL of each individual patient. The development of the relevant guidelines will ensure the transition to the European standards and prospects for the development of precision medicine. A comprehensive approach involving a wide range of stakeholders can take into account different points of view, which will ensure better QoL of patients.

The analysis of modern concepts of QoL assessment and the development of an algorithm for practical solutions in the context of a multimodal approach and timely implementation of the existing arsenal of innovative technologies can significantly affect the improvement of QoL of cancer patients.

It is of importance to note that within the framework of the Conference, the round table panel “General Principles of Horizon Europe Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructure for the European Union and Reforming of the System of Cancer Patients Specialized Care in Ukraine” was held. The discussion centered around QoL problems highlighted the role of the European shot projects in the retranslation of the models of the maturity of the infrastructure of the cancer care service accounting for the outcomes of the integration of the multidisciplinary research efforts and coordination of their implementation on the grounds of the best clinical practice.

The materials of the scientific and practical conference are presented in this issue of *Experimental Oncology*.

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