Abstract

The aim of this research is to check how social, demographic, and psychological factors and clinical factors influence occurrence of anxiety and depression among patients suffering from colorectal cancer. Patients with a diagnosis of colorectal cancer hospitalized at the Beskid Oncology Center at the John Paul II City Hospital in Bielsko-Biala were qualified for the study. A self-administered survey questionnaire on socio-demographic and clinical data and the following questionnaires were used in the study: Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale Modified (HADS-M), The Rotterdam Symptom Checklist (RSCL), Mini-Mental Adjustment to Cancer Scale (Mini-MAC), Acceptance of Illness Scale (AIS).

Subjects were patients, aged 18 or older, who had not received treatment with cytostatic drugs, gave free and informed consent to participate in the study, and showed mental capacity to complete standardized tests independently. Patients were excluded from the study if they had a clinical diagnosis other than colorectal cancer, were under the age of 18, and exhibited malaise that prevented them from completing the questionnaire.

The study group was divided into two groups based on biological sex - Group I included women diagnosed with colorectal cancer, while Group II consisted of men diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Patients were examined three times: the first examination took place before the start of chemotherapy treatment, the second examination was performed after 15 weeks of chemotherapy treatment, and the third examination took place after the end of chemotherapy.

Women were found to have higher levels of anxiety and depression during the second and third examinations, compared to men. Women were more likely to declare experiencing malaise induced by cytostatic drugs. Older men, on the other hand, showed increased levels of anxiety about chemotherapy. When physical symptoms increased in both groups, anxiety and depression increased. Correlations between coping styles and levels of anxiety and depression showed that the worse the cancer patients coped, the higher their levels of anxiety and depression. The results show a significant impact of the chemotherapy used on the experience of anxiety and depression.

Keywords: colorectal cancer, diagnosis, anxiety, depression, disease acceptance, chemotherapy, standardized survey instruments.