A Century of Progress
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HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE PROGNOSTICATORS IN HEAD AND NECK CANCER PATIENTS IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY USING THE FACIT-H&N.

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Objective: Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) prognosticators are vital considerations for treatment decision-making of head and neck cancer patients. This cross-sectional study aimed to identify potential socio-demographic and clinical prognosticators of HRQoL in head and neck cancer patients in a developing country.

Methodology: The Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness and Treatment - Head and Neck (FACIT-H&N)-V4 in Urdu language was administered through face-to-face interviews among a consecutive clinical convenience sample of 361 head and neck cancer patients in three identified tertiary care settings in Karachi, Pakistan. Socio-demographic details were obtained from patients whereas clinical details were extracted from their medical records. Data were statistically tested by using ‘general linear modeling’ through ‘multivariate analysis of variance’ (MANOVA) and ‘regression modeling’ to identify the potentially influencing prognosticators.

Results: The current on-going treatment status, advance tumor stage (III&IV) and carcinoma of larynx/ pharynx had the strongest negative impact on patients HRQoL, with a statistically significant decrement in FACIT summary scales (effect size >0.15). Moderate clinical prognosticators of HRQoL included palliative care whereas moderate socio-demographic prognostic variables included marital status, employment status and age (effect size >0.06 - 0.15). Weak clinical prognosticators of HRQoL included tumor stage, whereas socio-demographic factors with a small effect size (<0.01 - 0.06) included gender, education level and ethnicity.

Conclusion: This study reports 12 socio-demographic and clinical prognosticators, that have a possible influence on HRQoL of head and neck cancer patients, and that should be