



The Prevalence of Suicide Risk Among Oncology Patients at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Center (SQCCCRC): A Prospective Cross-Sectional Study

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AIM AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Aim: This study aims to assess the prevalence of suicidal risk among oncology patients at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Center (SQCCCRC).

Specific objectives:

- 1- To find the prevalence of suicidal risk among oncology patients at SQCCCRC.
- 2- To identify some risk factors associated with suicidal risk.

JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

So far, there are no similar studies have been done in Oman and other Arabic countries. Therefore, this study will be a base for future studies that will be done in these countries. Also, the results will help the cancer centers to pay attention to all patients and assess their suicidal status.

BACKGROUND

Generally, the presence of chronic physical illnesses and life-threatening conditions increase suicidal risk, such as cancer. (Qin et al., 2013)

The number of cancer patients is increasing which means that more people may have suicidal ideation. The estimated number of cancer survivors will be more than 20 million in 2026. (Osazuwa-Peters et al., 2018)

Previous studies tried to find the risk factors that are associated with the suicidal risk, such as gender, age, social support, and the cancer type.

Thus, those patients with a high suicidal risk must be identified to provide the appropriate medical help. In SQCCCRC, clinical interviews are used to assess the suicidal risk and ideation of oncology patients.

METHODOLOGY

This prospective cross-sectional study recruited 144 oncology patients (≥ 18 years old) at SQCCCRC. The Ask suicidal screening questions (ASQ) tool was applied to the participants. Then, clinical interviews were done. The prevalence of suicidal risk was obtained from both scales. Moreover, some variables were recorded, such as gender, age, cancer type, and social support. They were used to find their association with the suicidal risk.

All data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for The Social Sciences Software (SPSS). The chi-square test and fisher's exact test were used to find the associated risk factors of suicidal risk.

RESULTS

ASQ tool and clinical interview results

18.1% of patients have a positive screening result in ASQ, but all the cases were no-acute. However, all patients were found to have negative screen results using clinical interviews.

Risk factors associated with the positive suicidal screen in the ASQ tool

Figure1 shows the cancer types that are associated with the positive suicidal screen where breast cancer carried the highest percentage.

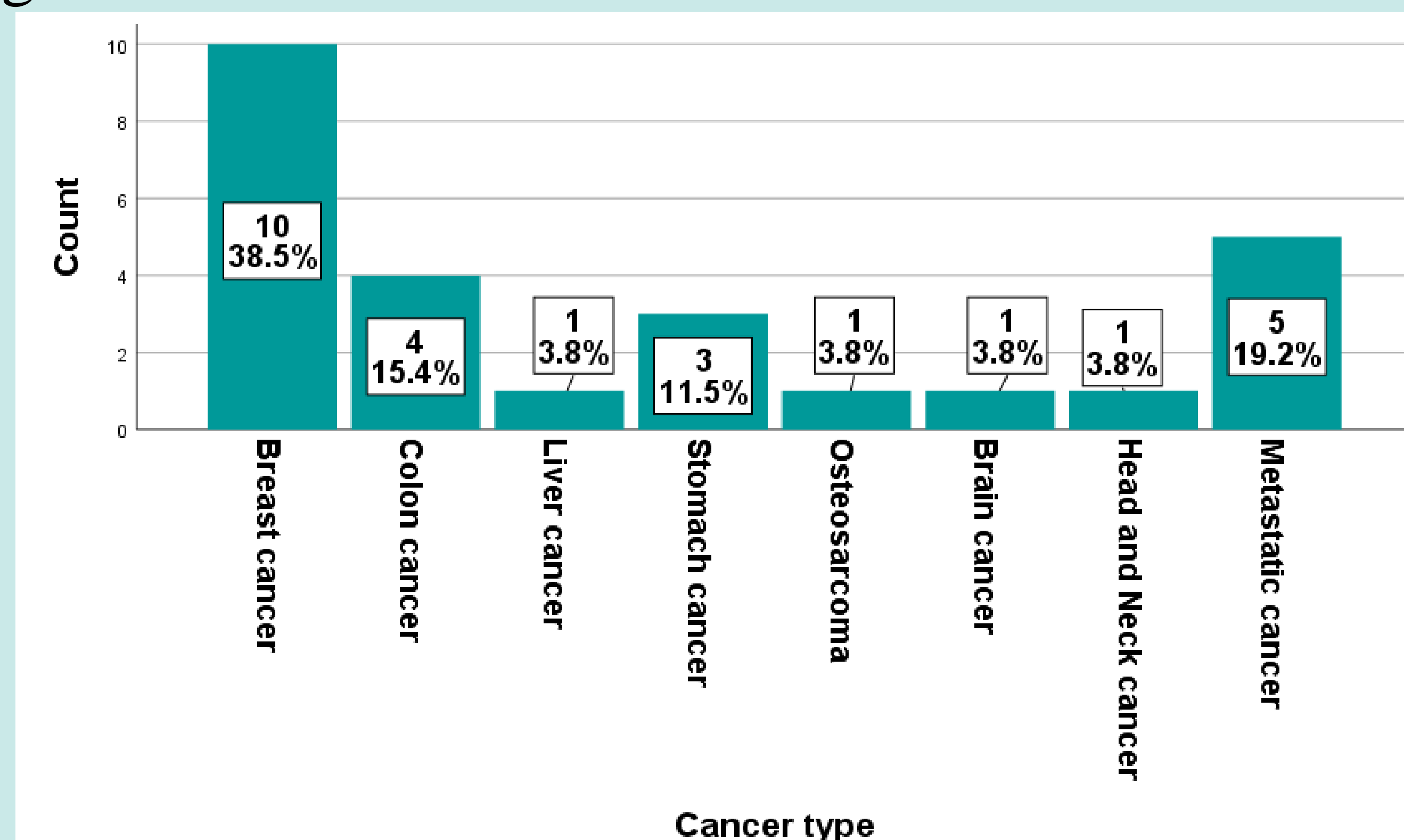


Figure 1: cancer types that are associated with the positive suicidal screen among oncology patients in SQCCCRC.

RESULTS

There is no significant association between suicidal risk and gender ($P=0.196$) in this study. The same is true regarding the association between suicidal risk and age ($P=0.640$).

Regarding social support, it is found to be strongly associated with suicidal risk ($P=0.0000001$). Table 1 shows the ASQ screening results in patients with social support and without.

Table 1: ASQ screening result and social support among oncology patients at SQCCCRC

Social support	Positive screen	Negative screen
Yes	12.0%	88%
No	57.9%	42.1%

SUMMARY

Our findings showed that there is no prevalence of suicidal ideation among oncology patients in SQCCCRC by using clinical interviews. However, there is a simple percentage of suicidal ideation in ASQ, but all cases were non-acute. Regarding risk factors, low social support has a strong association with suicidal ideation, while gender and age have no significant association with it. Therefore, all cancer centers must identify patients with suicidal ideation to provide them with appropriate psychotherapy services.

Main References

- 1- Qin, P., Webb, R., Kapur, N. and Sørensen, H. T. (2013) Hospitalization for physical illness and risk of subsequent suicide: a population study, *Journal of Internal Medicine*, 273(1): 48–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2796.2012.02572.x>.
- 2- Osazuwa-Peters, N., Simpson, M. C., Zhao, L., Boakye, E. A., Olomukoro, S. I., Deshields, T., Loux, T. M., Varvares, M. A. and Schootman, M. (2018) Suicide Risk Among Cancer Survivors: Head and Neck Versus Other Cancers, *Cancer*, 124(20): 4072–4079. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cncr.31675>