Coping and Adjustment for Multiple Myeloma Patients and Caregivers

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Thank You

- You are the experts on multiple myeloma
- I have the privilege of helping along the way
- Ask questions, share your experiences
Objectives

• Review common financial resources available to those with multiple myeloma

• Discuss the long-term impact of the diagnosis on patients and caregivers

• Review coping and adjustment to multiple myeloma

• Introduce the concept of grief and loss associated with multiple myeloma

• Consider your resilient qualities as patients and caregivers
What is Social Work?

Mission of Social Work

Enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

Financial Impact

• The number one fear/anxiety/concern for my patients is finances
  • Short-term, long-term disability
  • Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
  • COBRA insurance
  • State Medicaid (MA) or subsidized health care (Obama Care)
  • Ability to return to work
  • Ageism in the workforce
  • Employers wanting to terminate “sick” workers
  • Medical bills, prescription drug costs
Resources

- Most resources have income criteria
- Most resources are available annually
- Typically 500% of federal poverty guideline
  
  (For a household of two: $81,200 or less per year)

- Cancer Centers, hospitals, and clinics all have medical Social Workers able to help you navigate resources. It is OKAY to ask for help

- See handout for a comprehensive list of multiple myeloma resources.
  
  - Are we missing any?
Long-Term Impact of Multiple Myeloma

- Diagnosis
- Initial treatment
- Financial ramifications
- Possible need for stem cell transplant
- Physical changes over time
- Quality of life
- Relationship strain
- Relapse
Adjustment to Multiple Myeloma

- Fear, anger, sadness, hopelessness, depression
- Meaning finding/spirituality
- Relationship tension
- Information assimilation
- Denial and acceptance followed by denial and acceptance
- Loss of identify
- Loss of purpose
- What to do now
- Taking action and finding some control
Patient Coping with Multiple Myeloma

- Steroid Use (Yikes!)
- Sleep, appetite, ability to exercise, pain
- Emotional volatility is normal
- Feel and express negative emotions
- What can bring joy?
- Consider structure/routine
- Interpersonal connection
- When to meet with Psychiatry or inquire with Hematologist about anxiety/depression
Prevalence of Psychiatric Disorders in Cancer Patients

- Adjustment disorders
  - Range 14% - 34.7%

- Anxiety disorders
  - 23% clinically significant

- Depression
  - Rates of depression are reported from 25-50% among transplant patients

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Post-treatment: 35% meet full criteria

National Cancer Institute (2017)
Caregiver Coping with Multiple Myeloma

- Feeling overshadowed, overburdened, guilty, resentful, angry, overwhelmed, and scared
- Sleep, appetite, exercise, one’s own health
- Need for emotional expression
- Need to maintain personal identity
- Asking for help
Caregiver Exhaustion

- Fatigue,
- Mental fogginess
- Colds/viruses,
- Limited appetite,
- Foregoing personal care
- Loss of ability to experience joy
- Irritability, apathy, limited range of emotion
Grief and Loss

• We all experience loss and grief
• Individuals react differently
• Types of Loss
  • Material, identity, health/ability, loved one, future once envisioned
• Grief and mourning
• Awareness and expression
# Resilient Qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimism</th>
<th>Resilient Role Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support Network</td>
<td>Fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face Fears</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Moral Compass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help Others</td>
<td>Sense of Humor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Charney and Southwick (2012)
References


