

MARIA LAPID: Hello. I'm Dr. Maria Lapid, and I work at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. I'm a geriatric psychiatrist by training, and I also have additional training in hospice and palliative medicine. I'm here to talk to you about a trial that we tested on quality of life of advanced cancer patients.

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As we all know, quality of life is multidimensional. And as you can see on the slide, there's many aspects of quality of life. The major domains are emotional well-being, social well-being, spiritual well-being, mental well-being, as well as physical well-being.

The background of our study is that patients who have cancer experience big reductions in their quality of life while receiving cancer treatment. While many approaches address different domains of quality of life, there are studies that do not address all of the domains of quality of life. So we, with the Mayo Clinic Psycho-Oncology Research Group, developed a structured multidisciplinary intervention that's designed to improve the quality of life of advanced cancer patients.

For the study that I am presenting today, we looked at the differences in quality of life between older cancer patients-- that's ages 65 and older-- compared to younger patients-- ages 18 to 65-- after they participated in the psychosocial intervention designed to improve their quality of life.

For our methodology, our trial was registered with clinicaltrials.gov. What we did was we recruited newly diagnosed advanced cancer patients within the previous 12 months who were scheduled to undergo radiation therapy. These patients were randomized to either go through the quality of life intervention, that's the arm A, or randomized to the usual standard care, which is the control group.

The intervention group participated in six 90-minute sessions to address all of the multiple domains of quality of life. We measured quality of life before and after the intervention. And quality of life was then compared between the older and younger patients.

As you can see on the slide, the intervention is very structured. It's conducted by people from multiple disciplines, including physical therapy, chaplain, occupational therapy, nursing, psychology, psychiatry. There were six sessions, and each group lasted for about 90 minutes. After they completed the intervention over a four-week period, the intervention was followed by brief telephone contacts every week with the different topics listed on the slide.

This was the main finding of our study. We found that at week 4-- and this was immediately after the intervention-- the quality of life of the people who participated in the quality of life intervention was higher compared to the quality of life of those who did not participate in the intervention.

When we divided up the subjects in two-- geriatric, 65 and older, versus non geriatric, less than 65-- what we found was that at week 4, the older patients endorsed that they had a higher overall quality of life after the intervention compared to their younger counterparts.

We also looked at other quality of life measures. And again, we found on a different scale that the overall quality of life remained higher for older patients compared to the younger patients. And their social well-being after four weeks was also higher than the younger patients.

When we looked at the mood disturbances, at week 4 we found that the older patients had lower mood disturbances compared to their younger counterparts.

And overall our results show that the older patients, compared to the younger patients with advanced cancer, responded differently to the intervention and clearly showed a higher quality of life compared to their younger counterparts after they completed the quality of life intervention.

What this means is that older patients with advanced cancer can respond to quality of life interventions and should not be automatically excluded from projects that are designed to look at the effectiveness of quality of life interventions in cancer patients.

The two references are listed for your information.

Thank you. You can see my email on the screen. Hopefully you found this presentation helpful. Feel free to email if you have any questions.