Symptom Distress and Quality of Life in Women With Newly Diagnosed Ovarian Cancer Undergoing Chemotherapy: A Longitudinal Approach

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BACKGROUND: Women with newly diagnosed ovarian cancer who receive chemotherapy experience distressing symptoms and reduced quality of life (QOL). Previous study results identifying changes in symptom distress and QOL over time are limited.

OBJECTIVES: This study examined the trajectory of symptom distress and QOL among women with newly diagnosed ovarian cancer from before their first chemotherapy appointment to two weeks after completing six cycles of chemotherapy.

METHODS: A longitudinal design was used to examine symptom distress and QOL in 36 participants across eight time points. Generalized estimating equation analyses identified how participants’ symptom distress and QOL changed over time.

FINDINGS: Psychological symptom distress was highest at baseline and then decreased. Physical symptom distress increased at the second chemotherapy cycle. Similar results were found for QOL, with the lowest QOL reported after the fifth cycle.

Keywords: ovarian cancer; symptom distress; quality of life; longitudinal study; chemotherapy

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