Self-Perceived Health and its Determinants in Cancer Survivors: A Population-Based Study in Albania

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Abstract

Background: Self-perceived health is one of the most frequently used indicators in health and social research. It expresses subjective assessment of responder's health and it is a multidimensional indicator for the overall assessment of health associated with mortality and morbidity.

The aim of our study was to evaluate the sociodemographic and lifestyle factors determining the self-perceived health in cancer patients in Albania.

Methods: This is a population based cross sectional study. Data from 12554 individuals aged >35 years in the framework of Albanian Living Measurement Survey (LSMS), were included in the analysis. In order for the sample estimates from the Albania LSMS to be representative of the population, the data were multiplied by a sampling weight. The study participants rated their health in five categories: very good, good, average, poor and very poor, which in the analyses were dichotomized into "not poor" and "poor health". All participants that reported the presence of cancer as the chronic disease that affects them the most, were selected. Information on socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, employment status, residence) and lifestyle factors (smoking and alcohol intake) were collected. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 26 (SPSS, Chicago, IL).

Results: The data showed that 1.5% of the standardized population reported cancer as a chronic disease that causes them disability. The

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male female rate was 1:2.7. Upon multivariable adjustment for all covariates, factor affecting self-perceived health in cancer patients were
In the age adjusted analysis a strong positive correlation of self-perceived health in participant with cancer as chronic disease was found between employment and poor self-perceived health {OR (employed vs. unemployed) = 8.69, 95% CI = 8.39}. There was not a statistically significant relationship with the gender of the subjects included in the study.

After adjusting for all the variables included in the study, important "predictors" of poor self-perceived health status in participant with cancer as perceived chronic disease were: age (OR (≥66 years vs. 35-50 years old) = 2.59, 95% CI = 2.47-2.72), unemployment (OR = 11.78, 95% CI = 10.00-12.61), university level of education (OR = 1.83, 95% CI = 1.76-1.91) and alcohol intake (OR = 1.85, 95% CI = 1.79-1.92). Interestingly, in multivariate- adjusted models, the association of current smoking and poor self-perceived health in cancer changed direction
current smoking (OR = 1.76, 95% CI = 1.7-1.82).
Conclusion: Our findings represent the only report on SPH in cancer patients in Albania and indicate a significant relationship of self-perceived health in cancer patients with demographic, socioeconomic and lifestyle factors. Further population-based studies are needed to have more comparable results in order to promote an improvement in these factors and in self perceived health in cancer patients as an indicator of life quality.