

Influence of lifestyle and psychosocial factors on loneliness among cancer patients at Huntsman Cancer Institute (HCI)

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially changed social practices and health behaviors which may negatively impact mental health among cancer patients. We included N=1,469 cancer patients who visited HCI between 2016-2020 and completed a COVID-19 survey (August-September 2020). Based on self-report, patients were dichotomized into two groups: lonely (sometimes/usually/always; N=487) and

non-lonely (never/rarely; N=982). Lonely vs. non-lonely patients were younger, female, Hispanic, on Medicaid, had lost jobs due to the pandemic, had fair/poor health status and comorbidities (all $p < 0.05$). For lifestyle and psychosocial factors, lonely vs. non-lonely patients had increased alcohol and CBD oil/marijuana consumption, perceived and financial stress, fewer social interactions, and exercised less regularly (all $p < 0.05$). In multivariate analyses, being younger (OR=0.99; 95% CI=0.977-0.998), female (OR=1.86; 95% CI=1.41-2.46), increased alcohol consumption (OR=3.01; 95% CI=1.62-5.60), less social interaction (OR=2.44; 95% CI=1.71-3.47), and higher perceived (OR=8.66; 95% CI=4.56-16.44) and financial stress (OR=2.09; 95% CI=1.27-3.43) were associated with loneliness.

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