



THYROID CANCER

Thyroid cancer survivors with good outcomes continue to worry after cancer diagnosis

BACKGROUND

Thyroid cancer is the fastest rising cancer in women in the United States. Fortunately, there are very effective treatments for thyroid cancer and the prognosis is usually excellent. Cancer survivors frequently worry about their future and this can impact their quality of life. This cancer-related worry can continue for several years after a cancer diagnosis. Given the excellent outcomes for a majority of patients with thyroid cancer, it is sometimes thought that these patients do not have cancer-related worry. However, little is known about worry in these patients. The goal of this study is to better understand cancer-related worry in thyroid cancer survivors with good outcomes.

THE FULL ARTICLE TITLE

Papaleontiou M et al Worry in thyroid cancer survivors with a favorable prognosis. *Thyroid*. Epub 2019 Jun 22. PMID: 31232194.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Patients ages 18-79 years who were diagnosed with thyroid cancer between 2014-2015 were identified from the Georgia and Los Angeles County Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program registries. These patients were surveyed 2-4 years after their diagnosis. Questions regarding worry were included in the survey. Patients were asked how each the following worried them: harms from treatment, quality of life after their cancer

diagnosis, family members being at risk for cancer, their cancer coming back, and death. Patients also reported the impact of worry on their life and how often they had issues with daily activities, felt distant from friends/family, or felt upset because of their diagnosis of thyroid cancer.

A total of 2,215 thyroid cancer survivors who were disease-free were included in this study. Of those people who responded to the survey, 41% of patients reported worry about death, 54.7% reported worry about decreased quality of life, 58% reported worry about other family members being at risk for cancer, and 63.2% reported worry about their cancer coming back. There was more worry in patients with lower education when compared to those patients with a college degree or higher education. There was less worry reported in males and in older aged patients. Asian and Hispanic patients were associated with more worry than white patients.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY?

Cancer-related worry is a major problem for thyroid cancer survivors despite the excellent prognosis. Groups associated with more worry include female patients, younger patients, patients with lower education, and racial/ethnic minorities. Physician recognition of cancer-related worry is important recognize this and help patients to reduce worry.

— Priya Mahajan, MD

ATA THYROID BROCHURE LINKS

Thyroid Cancer (Papillary and Follicular): <https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-cancer/>

ABBREVIATIONS & DEFINITIONS

SEER: Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results program, a nation-wide anonymous cancer registry generated by the National Cancer Institute that

contains information on 26% of the United States population. Website: <http://seer.cancer.gov/>





THYROID CANCER, continued

Papillary thyroid cancer: the most common type of thyroid cancer. There are 4 variants of papillary thyroid cancer: classic, follicular, tall-cell and noninvasive follicular thyroid neoplasm with papillary-like nuclear features (NIFTP).

Follicular thyroid cancer: the second most common type of thyroid cancer.

