

Spiritual distress in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy: a longitudinal study



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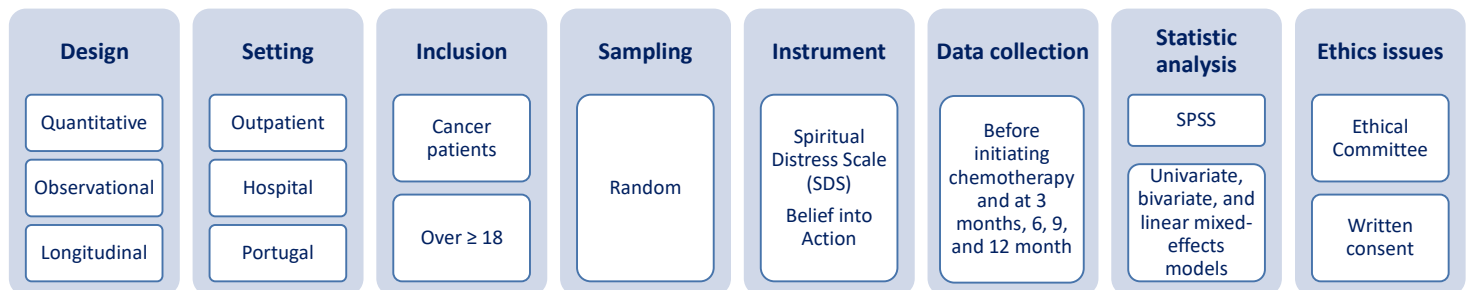
BACKGROUND AND AIM

Spiritual distress is a nursing diagnosis related to suffering and lack of meaning/purpose in life (Herdman et al., 2021). However, spiritual distress in clinical practice is often undervalued and neglected in nursing care (Roze des Ordonns et al., 2018). Cancer patients go through a complicated health situation in which the spiritual dimension is affected and experienced through spiritual distress (Martins & Caldeira, 2018).

AIM: To assess spiritual distress in patients undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

Keywords: cancer; chemotherapy; distress; spirituality.

METHODS



RESULTS

Sample characteristics (N=332)	
Females	56.6%
Mean age	60.30 (SD=± 11.37)
Range age	22 to 81 years old
Marital status	62% married
Occupation	41.3 retired
Religious affiliation	93.7%
Clinical diagnosis	Breast cancer (27.7%) Colon cancer (21.1%) Lung cancer (14.8%) Stomach cancer (6.6%)
Tumor stage	I - 5.1% II - 32.5% III - 45.5% IV - 16.9%



Trajectories did not differ significantly between man and women, but age and religious affiliation was predictor of spiritual distress.

Spiritual distress exhibited a negative, weak, statistically significant correlation with religious involvement.

Figure 1 Scatter plot of the distribution of SDS scores along the five cuts.

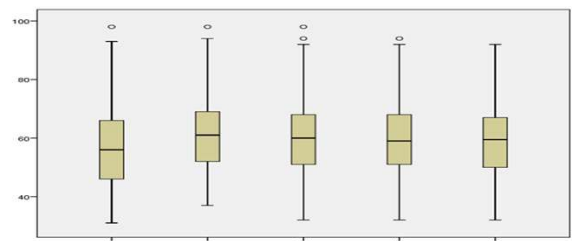


Table 1 Trajectories of spiritual distress across the five cuts.

Time point	Estimated Marginal Means				
	Mean	Std. Error	df	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
T0	56.602	.748	331.580	55.131	58.074
T1	60.966	.641	332.075	59.705	62.227
T2	60.524	.629	332.966	59.286	61.762
T3	60.003	.616	334.243	58.791	61.215
T4	59.721	.605	335.942	58.530	60.911

a. Dependent Variable: SDS.

Attrition of the sample



17.5%

CONCLUSION

There is an important variation of spiritual distress at three months after the beginning of chemotherapy. These data reinforce the need for spiritual assessment in cancer patients to promote spiritual health and well-being.