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Changing practice to improve quality of life in glioma

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Abstract

As treatment for glioma advances, with an attendant improvement in length of patient survival, the quality of that survival has rightly become an increasingly important patient-centered metric, and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) an important outcome measure. HRQOL is a self-assessed, multidimensional concept encompassing the physical, emotional, and social components of quality of life associated with illness and its treatment. Neurosurgeons caring for patients with gliomas should be aware of the latest research on HRQOL to understand mechanisms by which it can be improved. Neurosurgical outcomes related to surgical complications and neurological deficits can be important determinants of HRQOL and are well understood by neurosurgeons. However, an understanding of more general or global determinants of HRQOL not commonly addressed in the clinic, and implementation of the attendant evidence-based interventions to address them, would be transformative. The authors explore HRQOL determinants related to patient-, social-, tumor-, and treatment-related factors, with a particular emphasis on the strongest determinants, fatigue, sleep disturbance, anxiety, depression, neurocognitive dysfunction, caregiver distress, and end-of-life concerns. Evidence-based interventions are reviewed, including fatigue management, cognitive rehabilitation, insomnia interventions exercise, caregiver training, palliative care, and an overall multidisciplinary team approach. Lastly, features of a program are outlined that would embed HRQOL in neurosurgical care to the benefit of both patients and staff.

Keywords: caregivers; glioma; health-related quality of life; oncology; outcomes; treatment.

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