

# Diagnosis Makes Differences in Levels of Fear of Cancer Recurrence and Care Needs: Comparison Among Three Types of Cancers

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## Introduction

Fear of cancer recurrence (FCR) is the critical concern for cancer patients. Patients might also have different care needs because of disease characteristics. However, limited investigations have explored patients' FCR and care needs across different major cancers types.

## Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore three major types of cancer survivors (Early Stage Lung Cancer, Gynecologic Cancer, Head & Neck Cancer) of their experiences in FCR and care needs in a medical center in northern Taiwan.

## Methods

1. Eligible subjects: cancer patients who were operable and have completed major anti-cancer treatments and with disease-free conditions.
2. Measures: the validated Chinese version of Fear of Cancer Recurrence Inventory (FCRI-Chinese) questionnaire and Supportive Care Needs Survey–Screening Tool (SCNS-S9).
3. IRB approval and patients consents were obtained before data collection.

## Results

A total of 217 subjects were recruited.

1. Early stage lung cancer patients reported to have the highest concerns about the cancer recurrence and care needs.
2. GYN cancer patients reported to have relatively lower levels in both concerns, when compared to the other two types of cancer patients.

## Conclusions

Although most of these subjects were in early stage and operable, FCR and unmet care needs are still their concerns. Differences of cancer diagnosis might lead to different concerns. Individualized care based on a systematic assessment of FCR and care needs should be applied to improve cancer patients' life quality.

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**Table 1. Background Information (N=217)**

Variables	Cancer type		
	HNC (N=71)	LC (N=75)	GYNC (N=71)
	N (%) or Mean (SD)	N (%) or Mean (SD)	N (%) or Mean (SD)
Age	53.2 (12.9)	57.7 (11.2)	56.5 (10.0)
KPS	91.1 (9.0)	98.9 (3.1)	92.7 (7.2)
Gender			
Male	47 (66.2)	21 (29.2)	0 (0.0)
Female	24 (33.8)	51 (70.8)	100 (100.0)
Education			
Illiteracy/elementary school	20 (28.2)	9 (12.0)	12 (16.9)
Junior/senior high school	35 (49.3)	16 (21.3)	43 (60.6)
Bachelor/master degree	16 (22.5)	50 (66.7)	16 (22.5)
Marriage			
Single or widowed	17 (23.9)	9 (12.0)	22 (31.0)
Married	54 (76.1)	66 (88.0)	49 (69.0)
Working status			
None/retired	32 (45.1)	38 (50.7)	17 (23.9)
Yes	39 (54.9)	37 (49.3)	54 (76.1)
Disease stage			
I	42 (59.2)	62 (82.7)	63 (88.7)
II	29 (40.8)	6 (8.0)	8 (11.3)
IIIA	0 (0.0)	7 (9.3)	0 (0.0)
FCR			
Normal level	31 (43.7)	34 (45.3)	43 (60.6)
Clinical level	40 (56.3)	41 (54.7)	28 (39.4)

Note: FCR was measured by FCRI-Severity with clinical level indicating higher risk of psychiatric disorder.

**Table 2. Mean Scores of Cancer Patients' Care Needs (N=217)**

Items	Mean (SD)	Rank
(1) Lack of energy/tiredness	13.5 (22.9)	
(2) Not being able to do the things you used to do	12.8 (21.1)	
(3) Fears about the cancer spreading	26.0 (29.9)	(3)
(4) Uncertainty about the future	18.9 (25.5)	
(5) Changes in sexual feelings	8.4 (17.5)	
(6) Reassurance by medical staff that the way you feel is normal	23.4 (27.5)	
(7) Hospital staff acknowledging, and showing sensitivity to your feelings and emotional needs	20.4 (23.5)	
(8) Being informed about your test results as soon as feasible	44.8 (36.2)	(1)
(9) Being informed about things you can do to help yourself to get well	43.4 (34.9)	(2)

Note: Patients' needs were measured by SCNS-S9 with each item scoring 0-100 (the higher the score, the higher the needs).

**Table 3. Correlations Among FCR and Related Variables (N=217)**

Variables	a	b	c	d
a. FCR	1			
b. Care needs	0.47**	1		
c. Age	-0.20**	-0.01	1	
d. KPS	-0.01	-0.15*	-0.26**	1

Note: a. measured by FCRI-Severity; b. measured by SCNS-S9; d. measured by Karnofsky Performance Scale. Using spearman's correlation coefficient, \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4. Difference of FCR and Care Needs (N=217)**

	HNC <sup>a</sup>	LC <sup>b</sup>	GYN <sup>c</sup>	F	Post-Hoc
	(N=71)	(N=75)	(N=71)		
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
FCR	13.1 (6.9)	14.4 (5.5)	11.3 (6.3)	8.434*	b>c
Care needs	22.4 (14.3)	31.7 (18.2)	16.0 (14.5)	32.723**	b>a, c; a>c

Note: Post-hoc test with Kruskal-Wallis test; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .