



Psychological Impact of Advanced Cancer

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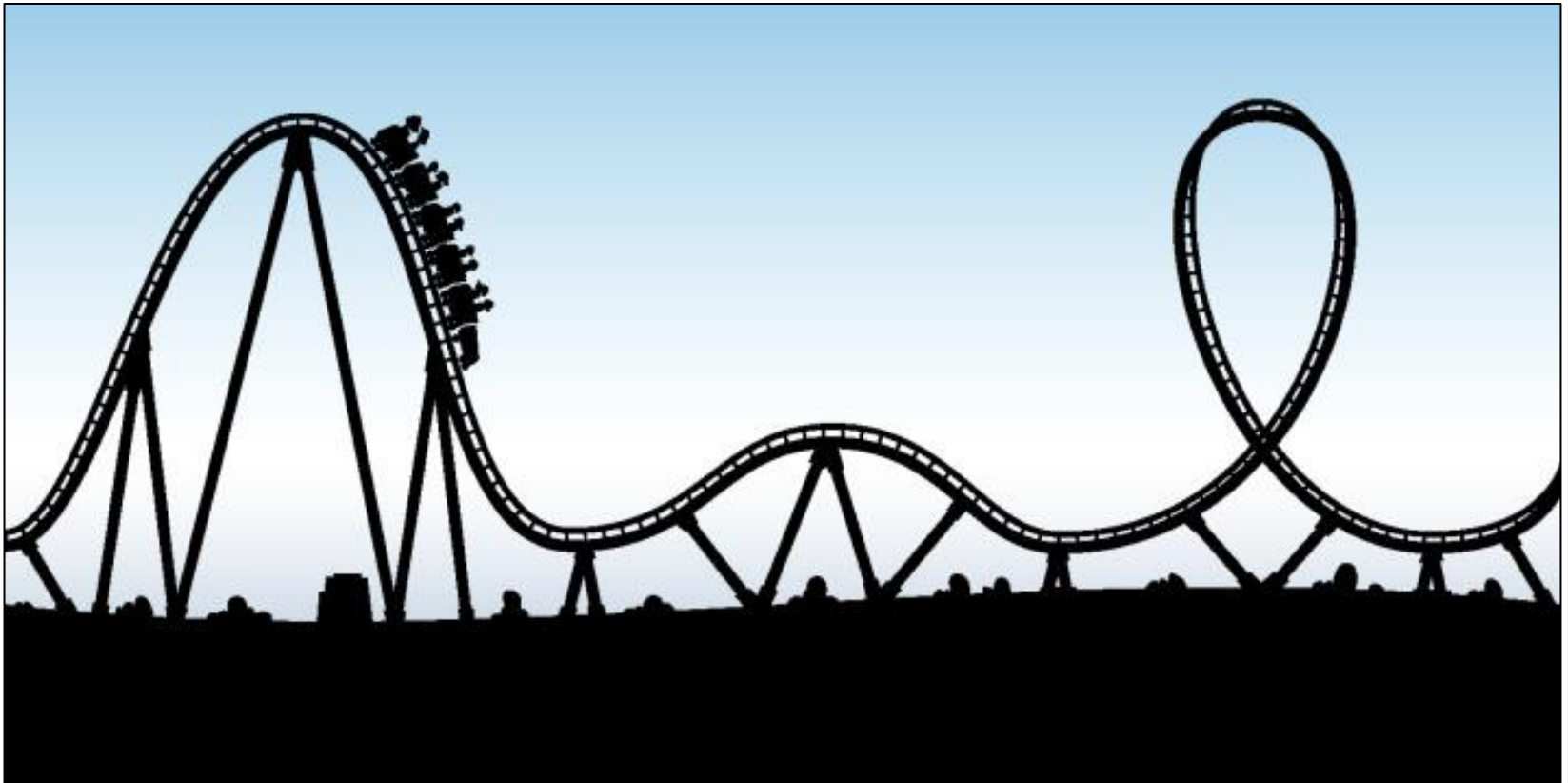
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Trust



Impact of cancer and treatment



Living with the challenges

- Physical
- Uncertainty
- Social
- Loss of control
- Finding meaning
- Future



This is not who I am



Challenges for Men

- Sense of self as a man
- Sexual self
- Masculinity and role
- Less willing to share feelings?
- Expectations of coping
- Often no previous health contact
- Talking about Cancer?



Pete

“It’s very frustrating. I’m not looking for something to make me feel better - they can’t do that. I just want them to listen to me. It’s easier not to say anything.”



Impact on relationships

- 76% Erectile Dysfunction
- Both patient and partner report distress
- Marital dissatisfaction increased over time

Couper et al 2006



Distress Continuum

SELF CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT

PROFESSIONAL CARE

HEALTHY

Normal Functioning

Normal mood fluctuations.
Takes things in stride.
Consistent performance.
Normal sleep patterns.
Physically and socially active. Usual self-confidence
Comfortable with others.

REACTING

Common & Reversible Distress

Irritable/Impatient.
Nervousness, sadness, increased worrying.
Procrastination, forgetfulness. Trouble sleeping (more often in falling asleep) Lowered energy. Difficulty in relaxing. Intrusive thoughts.
Decreased social activity.

INJURED

Significant Functional Impairment

Anger, anxiety. Lingering sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness, worthlessness.
Preoccupation. Decreased performance in academics or at work. Significantly disturbed sleep (falling asleep and staying asleep).
Avoidance of social situations, withdrawal.

ILL

Clinical Disorder. Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment.

Significant difficulty with emotions, thinking High level of anxiety, Panic attacks. Depressed mood, feeling overwhelmed Constant fatigue. Disturbed contact with reality Significant disturbances in thinking Suicidal thoughts/ intent/behaviour.



Psychological adjustment

- Depression and anxiety predict poorer psych outcomes
- Coping that involves interpersonal awareness and expression of emotions linked to better adjustment
- Sense of helplessness correlates with low self-esteem and depression

Bloch et al (2007)



Screen for distress early



- Would you describe yourself as a worrier?
- Have you ever struggled with depression?
- How have you coped with challenges in the past?
- Do you have someone you can talk to?
- What stops you? What gets in the way?



When does normal become abnormal?



Psychological Disorders

- 21% depression
- 10% anxiety disorders
- 19% adjustment disorder

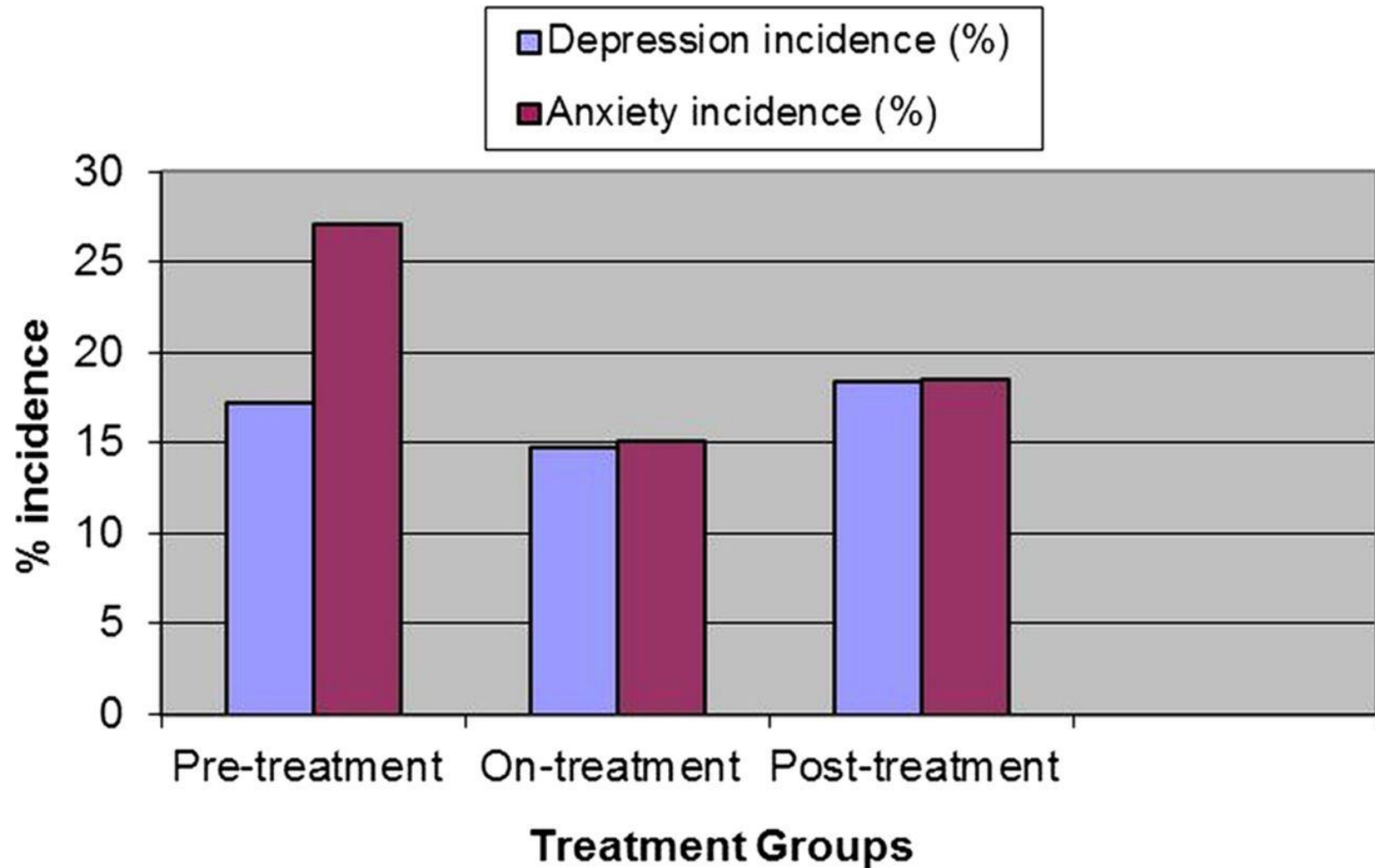


Prevalence in Oncology / Haematology, Mitchell et al (2011)



Depression and anxiety

% prevalence across treatments



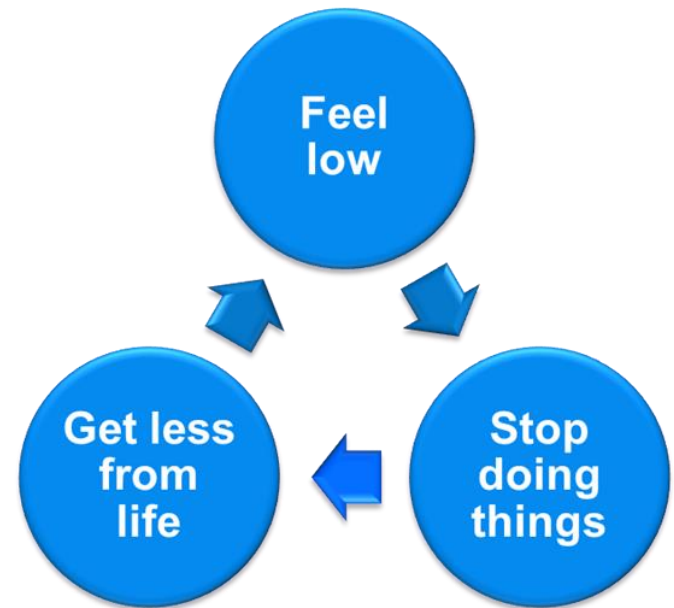
What is Depression?

- Low / Depressed mood most of the day on most days
- Loss of interest or enjoyment in previously enjoyable activities
- Increasing irritability
- Easily moved to tears
- Recurrent thoughts of death
- Suicidal thoughts
- Men often present with irritability/ anger issues



Case Study - Tom

- 67yrs, married, two sons, three grandchildren
- Fatigue, bone pain
- Irritable and withdrawn
- “What’s the point?”
- HADS: Dep=14, Anx=11
- Declined anti-depressants



Tom - Depression

- Depression → increase routine and activity
- Planned and began train set
- Rehearsed what he wanted to say
- Unfinished business



What is Anxiety?

- Prominent tension, worry and feelings of apprehension about every-day events and problems.
- Physical symptoms may be present including:
 - *Palpitations / increased heart rate / tight chest*
 - *Sweating, Trembling, Muscle tension*
 - *Difficulty breathing, 'choking'*
 - *Nausea, dizziness, tingling*
- Avoidance, Checking



Anxiety = $\frac{\text{Overestimate threat}}{\text{Underestimate resources}}$



Unhelpful coping strategies

- Avoidance / Withdrawal
short-term relief / gain, long-term pain
- Excessive worry
trying to make the uncertain certain
- Rumination
negative thinking about the past



Helpful coping strategies

- Physical Exercise
- Relaxation / Breathing / Visualisation
- Mindfulness – in the present moment
- Doing something more interesting



Mindfulness Resources

www.franticworld.com

www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk

www.friendlyfocusing.com

www.bemindfulonline.co.uk

www.headspace.com



Helpful coping strategies 2

- Set realistic plans and goals
- Problem solving – What steps do I need to take?
- Talk to someone / Write it out
- Finding your “new” normal
- Counselling / CBT
- Soothing self-talk

“Thoughts aren’t facts”

“It’s just my alarm going off”

“I’ve coped before so I can cope again”



Looking after ourselves



References

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De Sousa A *et al* (2012) Psychological Aspects of Prostate Cancer: a clinical review. *Prostate Cancer Diseases*

Michele Angelo Petrone pictures

<http://www.mapfoundation.org/ecj.html>



Questions?

