Abstract:

PURPOSE: Previous research discussed the predictive value of psychosocial variables along with biomedical predictors for survival; such as affective functioning and quality of life. The present study addresses the following research question: does perceived social support prior to PSBCT have an impact on post-transplant survival?

SUBJECTS AND METHODS: Ninety-nine patients suffering from Multiple Myeloma (n=55), Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (n=33), and other malignancies (n=11) completed the Illness Specific Scales of Social Support (ISSS) before undergoing PBSCT. ISSS is comprised of the subscales 'positive social support' and 'problematic social support', e.g. criticising, victimising, or avoiding interactions. RESULTS: The mean score in the subscale 'positive social support' was 3.2 (S.D. 0.54; range 0 until 4), in the subscale 'negative social support' 0.94 (S.D. 0.53). There was no association between positive interactions and survival following PBSCT. Conversely, those patients perceiving problematic social support, showed a correspondence with poor survival following PBSCT (RR=3.649; p=0.015; Cox-regression analysis). The following variables were controlled: Karnofsky Performance Status, interferon treatment, depression and participation in psychotherapy. CONCLUSION: Differentiating between positive and problematic interactions prior to
PBSCT helps to recognise detrimental forms of social support. Future research should investigate the clinical implications and help tailor psychotherapeutic intervention.