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Health Related Quality Of Life In Cancer Clinical Trials: The Research Perspective.

Abstract

Treatments for cancer may have substantial adverse effects, yet offer improvements in duration of survival or relief of tumour-related symptoms.

Measurement of the net effect of treatment on quality of life has therefore emerged as an outcome variable in clinical trials, since it is often more easily assessed than formal utilities which might otherwise illuminate treatment preference decisions.

Assessment of HRQOL may use a variety of measurement instruments, mostly recording the patient's own opinions, though in certain circumstances surrogate respondents may be an alternative, or indeed inescapable.

In metastatic disease, HRQOL has also emerged as an independent prognostic factor for survival duration, but this has not been found in studies of earlier stages of disease.

The experience of the Australian-New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group and International Breast Cancer Study Group in several generations of clinical trials conducted over the past twenty years will be used to illustrate these applications of HRQOL.

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