

EXAMINATION OF PATIENT AND MEDICAL DELAY AMONG PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH CERVICAL CANCER

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OBJECTIVES: For the success cervical cancer treatment the delay time elapsed between the first symptoms to the medical visit and the diagnosis is essential. The aim of the study is to examine the extent of diagnostic delay and the influencing factors among women with cervical cancer.

METHODS: Quantitative cross-sectional study was carried out between 2016 April and February 2017, with targeted non-random sampling method patients diagnosed with cervical cancer in the past five years and treated in Zalaegerszeg and Szombathely city hospitals were selected (n=147). The question groups of the self-made questionnaire were: socio-demographic data, information, delay, symptom ratings, practice of medical visits. In addition to the descriptive statistical analysis χ -test, and ANOVA were applied ($p < 0.05$) with SPSS software.

RESULTS: Patients above 51 years of age ($p=0.018$, 64.5%), and patients with elementary qualifications ($p=0.005$, 73.1%) had significantly less knowledge about the risk factors for cervical cancer. The patient delay (PD - the first perception of symptoms to medical visit) was an average of 4 ± 6.1 months. The medical delay (MD-first medical visit to the start of treatment) was an average of 3 ± 6.1 months. Where three or more symptoms were perceived MD was significantly ($p=0.020$) longer (mean 3 vs. 9.76 months). Women who experienced vaginal bleeding the MD was significantly ($p=0.006$) longer (5.52 months). Patients who never use self-medication was significantly longer PD ($p=0.034$, 8.5 vs 1.2 months)

CONCLUSIONS: In our research the number of symptoms has been identified as an influencing factor for medical delay. The lack of knowledge has a role in patient delay. Procrastination following the perception of symptoms may affect the prognosis. Knowledge

of the factors associated with the causes of delay in diagnosis may contribute to increase the effectiveness of preventive campaigns and early detection support.

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