

Balancing Quality of Life and Cancer Treatment Toxicities

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The Changing Face of Cancer and Its Treatment

- Cancer and its treatment have changed¹
 - more patients are being cured
 - duration of survival is increasing
- As more patients are cured and/or survival times increase, patients are increasingly more concerned about their quality of life (QOL)²
- Physicians need to balance treatment toxicity with maintenance of the patient's QOL

¹Fallowfield, Int J Pharm Med (2001)

²Khayat, Sem in Onc (2000)

Changes in Importance of QOL to Patients

- Survey conducted to evaluate patients' perceptions of QOL changes
- 100 patients undergoing chemotherapy were surveyed, including 40 patients with breast cancer
- Of a possible 70 side effects, top 6 rankings were
 1. Affects family or partner
 2. Alopecia
 3. Fatigue
 4. Affects work/home duties
 5. Affects social activities
 6. Loss of sexual feeling

Change in Patient Perceptions of Chemotherapy-Related Side Effects

- 3 most troubling side effects of cytotoxic therapy

1983 ¹	2000 ²
1. Emesis	1. Affects family or partner
2. Nausea	2. Alopecia
3. Alopecia	3. Fatigue

¹Coates, Eur J Cancer Clin Oncol (1983); ²Carelle, Cancer (2002)

Patients' Perspective on Chemotherapy

- **86 patients with breast cancer**
 - **70% would accept chemotherapy for 5% improvement despite toxicities**
- **Extension of life by 6 months**
 - **Only 58% who experienced severe lifestyle disruption with chemotherapy would accept further treatment**
 - **84% of those who experienced little or no disruption would accept further chemotherapy**