

DEMENTIA MAY REDUCE LIKELIHOOD OF A “GOOD DEATH” FOR PATIENTS WITH CANCER

FEBRUARY 5, 2020 - As the population ages, the number of cancer patients with dementia has increased. A recent study published in *Geriatrics & Gerontology International* found that cancer patients with dementia were less likely to achieve a “good death” than those without.

In the study, quality of death was measured from nurses’ reports and factored in life completion, place of death, and symptom management.

Of the 508 patients with cancer in the study, 156 (30.7%) had dementia. Dementia was associated with a reduced quality of death among patients.

The study’s authors note that it may be difficult to confirm patients’ end-of-life preferences because of cognitive decline. Their findings point to the importance of enhancing end-of-life care discussions with patients and their families.

“In order to provide high quality of end-of-life care, we should facilitate end-of-life care discussions and improve symptom management especially for cancer patients with dementia,” said lead author Kayo Hirooka, RN, PhD, of Keio University, in Japan.

Full citation: Hirooka K, Nakanishi M, Fukahori H, Nishida A. Impact of dementia on quality of death among cancer patients: An observational study of home palliative care users. *Geriatr Gerontol Int.* 2020 Feb 4. doi: 10.1111/ggi.13860.

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