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## Identifying symptoms experienced by patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancers receiving standard therapies: Report from Japan

**Tamami Hamada**

Asahikawa Medical University, Japan

**Statement of the Problem:** Standard therapies have made it possible for patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancers (NSCLC) to expect to survive for longer periods. However, there remain problems related to maintaining balance between the burdens of symptoms accompanying treatment and the quality of life (QOL) during the treatment because chemotherapies and biotherapy tend to cause new symptoms. This study will describe symptoms experienced by advanced stage (IIIB or IV) NSCLC patients and the interference experienced in daily life with standard therapies.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** The study is a prospective observation study using a qualitative descriptive design. Prospective participants were 30–80 years of age with advanced stage (IIIB or IV) NSCLC undergoing standard therapies. Patients with cognitive impairment or severe pain were excluded. Semi-structured interviews were conducted twice: at the baseline and four weeks later. An interviewer encouraged participants to talk freely about any symptoms they experienced. The narratives were recorded on a digital voice recorder, with permission, and descriptive analysis and content analysis were performed.

**Findings:** Eight patients expressed consent to participate and be interviewed. Of these, six were interviewed a second time. Participants reported 33 different symptoms (mean 10.8) at the first interview, and 23 (mean 9.1) at the second, showing some relationships among symptoms, although common symptoms and personal symptoms were included. Interference with daily life varies among participants, but commonly hindered hobbies and walking.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Patients with advanced NSCLC receiving standard therapies experienced multiple symptoms, suffering from increased interferences in daily life and poor QOL without effective alleviation. The findings suggest that it is important for health care professionals to identify multiple symptoms working closely with patients, find effective measures to ease the burden of symptoms due to treatment, and assist patients to prevent deterioration of QOL.

### Biography

Tamami Hamada specializes in understanding symptoms which patients with advanced non-small cell lung cancers (NSCLC) experience, and develops care programs for these, while also focusing on training advanced Oncology Nurse Practitioners, who conduct the practical aspects of implementing care programs. She has demonstrated the existence of symptom clusters based on symptom severity among patients with advanced NSCLC, and published findings about this, suggesting the possibility that Japanese cultural features may influence symptoms experienced by Japanese patients with advanced NSCLC. Research into understanding the symptoms experienced and developing measures for symptom management will benefit care to improve the well-being of individuals with different cultural backgrounds aiming to maintain balance between the burdens of symptoms and advanced medical treatment.

thamada@asahikawa-med.ac.jp

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