PREVALENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF PAIN IN TIKUR ANBESSA HOSPITAL RADIOTHERAPY CENTER

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PURPOSE
Prevalence of cancer is on a rise globally, in particular in developing countries. Pain is one of the most feared and burdensome symptoms in cancer patients and it remain a public health problem in cancer care in Ethiopia. The aim of this study was to identify the baseline prevalence of pain among in-patients at the general medical and oncology wards at a tertiary teaching hospital Tikur Anbassa Hospital in Addis Ababa, the pattern of pain management by the health care providers; and to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of pain management of health care providers.

RESULTS
648 patients admitted to the oncology wards were interviewed out of which 265 (40.9%) were males, and 383 (59.1%) females. Of the total, 390 (60.2%) had experienced pain in the previous 24 hours. Out of the 390 patients with pain 161 (41.28%) had severe pain. Out of the 390 patients with pain, 255 (65.4%) were prescribed analgesics, and 135 (34.6%) patients with pain were not given any analgesics. Out of the 161 patients with severe pain only 50 (31.0%) were given morphine for their pain. The remaining 111 patients (69.0%) were given other analgesics. Considering recommendations of analgesic regimen for the hypothetical patient with severe cancer pain, 50% recommended morphine, the rest recommended NSAIDs Tramadol, and paracetamol. 50% of prescriptions were for oral medication and 50% for parental medication.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
This was a cross sectional, quantitative, observational study design conducted in Tikur Anbassa Hospital, in relation to knowledge and attitude of health care professionals in addressing pain in Tikur Anbassa Hospital. The characteristics of the pain and its management were assessed using the “Short Brief Pain inventory” (Cleeland C.S. 1991).

CONCLUSION
Pain is highly prevalent and undertreated in cancer patients at the oncology center at TASH. Health care professionals lack the basic knowledge and harbor misconceptions about the clinical use of morphine for cancer pain treatment. Creating training opportunities for medical staff is necessary to increase their awareness and knowledge of effective cancer pain management.