Trajectories of quality of life, health status and personal wellbeing up to two years after curative intent treatment for colorectal cancer: results from the UK ColoREctal Wellbeing (CREW) cohort study

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Background

Cancer survivorship is a growing global concern and the current aftercare system does not sufficiently meet patients' needs; patterns of recovery should be considered in order to tailor aftercare appropriately.

Aims

Examine trajectories of quality of life (QoL), health status and personal wellbeing in the first two years following colorectal surgery.

Methods

Cohort study of 872 UK colorectal cancer patients. Questionnaires at baseline (pre-surgery), 3, 9, 15, 24 months. QoL, health status, personal wellbeing, physical symptoms, anxiety, depression, self-efficacy, social support, socio-demographic and clinical/treatment characteristics were examined. Longitudinal analyses assessed change in QoL, health and wellbeing over time and predictors of trajectories.

Results

Four distinct trajectories (groups) were identified for each outcome measure. Group 1: consistently good QoL (31.3%), mild and improving health problems (20.9%), consistently good wellbeing (44.9%). Groups 2 and 3: intermediate and changing levels of QoL, health status and personal wellbeing. Group 4: consistently poor QoL (5.3%) and health status (7.4%), very poor/declining wellbeing (4.2%). 11.5% were in Group 4 for $\geq$ 1 of the outcomes. Higher pre-surgery depression and lower self-efficacy were significantly associated with poorer trajectories for all three outcomes after adjusting for other important predictors including disease characteristics, stoma, anxiety and social support.

Conclusions

Distinct recovery trajectories following colorectal cancer treatment can be identified with risk factors. Different approaches to follow-up care are warranted and these results provide robust data regarding who is likely to need more intensive support, which will inform the development of risk-stratified follow-up management tailored to an individual's need.

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