Nationwide Analysis of Suicide in Cancer Patients and Examination of Suicide Prevention Programs at Cancer Clinics

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Summary:

This study aims to realize empirical measures to prevent suicide among cancer patients, and has the following two objectives: 1) to analyze the actual number of suicides among cancer patients, including risk factors, using the National Cancer Registry information and the database of medical safety information collection cases; and 2) to investigate the suicide response flow in cancer hospitals from the viewpoint of medical safety, and the system of cooperation with related organizations, and consider a suicide prevention program that is in line with actual conditions.

Research 1: Nationwide analysis of suicide among cancer patients

1. Suicide rate and risk factor analysis by region using the National Cancer Registry information

    We calculated the expected suicide rate for patients newly diagnosed with cancer in 2016-2017 using the age, gender, observation period, and suicide rate of the general population in the prefecture of residence. Using Hokkaido as the standard, a statistically significant high-risk ratio was shown in a total of 10 prefectures, centered on the Hokuriku region. However, no significant correlation was found between the amount of alcohol consumed by prefecture and the SMR of each region.

2. Risk factor analysis using the Japan Healthcare Functional Evaluation Organization medical safety information collection case database

    Using data from 2010 to 2020, we extracted cases of completed and attempted suicides among patients with cancer and physical illnesses. Content analysis was conducted to identify sentinel events from the descriptions in the reports, and nine factors were extracted, including physical and mental symptoms and a history of mental illness. In addition, five factors were extracted regarding medical personnel's actions, including intervention by the medical practitioner in charge and intervention by a mental health professional.

Research 2: Examination of suicide prevention programs in cancer treatment hospitals

We organized the survey items and collected information in order to gather cases in which we cooperated with related institutions based on the response flow for suicide in hospitals when a suicide case occurs.