



**WELLBEING AND DISTRESS
AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND
YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER:
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM AN
ONGOING STUDY**

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**AN INTERVENTION INITIATIVE BY
SANJEEVANI..... LIFE BEYOND
CANCER**



Introduction: Adolescents and young adults (AYA) with cancer face physical, emotional, and social challenges that extend beyond diagnosis and treatment. This group is particularly vulnerable to psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and difficulties in social adjustment, highlighting the need for targeted psychosocial support.

Objectives: This ongoing study aims to evaluate wellbeing and distress in AYA cancer patients and to identify key domains of difficulty.

Methods: Fifty-two patients aged 16-25 years were assessed using the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index and the Distress Thermometer. Data were cleaned, coded, and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, chi-square tests, and Spearman's correlation to explore associations between variables.

Results: The sample comprised 29 males and 23 females, with a mean age of 20.75 ± 3.11 years (Median = 21; range 16–25). Cancer types included hematological, head and neck, reproductive, bone and soft tissue, brain, and digestive system malignancies. The mean wellbeing score was 17.55 ± 6.42 (Median = 20), suggesting moderate impairment in psychological wellbeing (WHO-5 cut-off ≤ 13 indicates poor wellbeing). The mean distress score was 2.69 ± 3.17 (Median = 1), reflecting generally mild distress levels; however, a subset reported clinically significant distress (≥ 4). High distress was associated with pain, fatigue, sleep disturbances, mood changes, altered appearance, financial strain, relationship difficulties, and loss of meaning. Patients with strong family support demonstrated significantly higher wellbeing ($p < 0.05$) and lower distress compared to those with weaker support.

Conclusion: Preliminary findings indicate that while average distress levels appear mild, many AYAs report substantial wellbeing impairments and challenges across multiple life domains. Family support emerged as a protective

factor. These results underscore the importance of psychosocial interventions tailored for AYA oncology. Further analysis with a larger sample is underway.

Keywords: Adolescents, Young adults, Cancer, Wellbeing, Distress