



CANCERcare®

Psychosocial Facts & Stats

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- According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), psychosocial health care addresses the emotional challenges that can accompany a serious illness as well as the life challenges that can prevent good health care and patients' ability to take care of themselves.
- The health care community is increasingly aware of the importance of addressing psychological and social problems in the lives of patients in order to provide good quality health care and promote better health. As a result, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) asked the IOM to examine and report how the health care system copes with cancer patients' psychological and social problems, and how psychosocial care can be improved.
- Patients suffering from depression, anxiety or excessive stress can have difficulty remembering things, concentrating and making decisions. These mental health problems can also decrease patients' motivation to complete treatment and change unhealthy practices as well as decrease their ability to cope with the demands of a rigorous treatment process.
- There is growing evidence that stress can directly interfere with the working of the body's immune system and other functions.
- The IOM report recommends a new standard for quality care. This standard states that all cancer care should ensure appropriate psychosocial health services by:
 - o Facilitating effective communication between patients and care providers
 - o Identifying each patient's psychosocial health needs
 - o Designing and implementing a plan that links the patient with needed psychosocial services, coordinates biomedical and psychosocial care and engages and supports patients in managing their illness and health
 - o Systematically following up on, re-evaluating and adjusting plans
- The IOM committee found that health care providers often do not ask about psychosocial problems or link patients to available services—with detrimental effects.
- In 2012, the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) released standards stating that all cancer programs will need to demonstrate that they screen patients diagnosed with cancer and identify the issues that can negatively impact treatment and outcome.

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