

Review of: "The tumor patient in the COVID-19 pandemic—an interview-based study of 30 patients undergoing systemic antiproliferative therapy"

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Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

I read with interest the study of Kaiser et al. [1] entitled: The tumor patient in the COVID-19 pandemic—an interview-based study of 30 patients undergoing systemic anti-proliferative therapy. I accepted with pleasure the invitation to review this novel work post-publication from a rheumatologists perspective.

The conclusion and conferred message add value to the newly emerging management regimens in medicine during the COVID-19 pandemic that comprises remote follow up. In addition, the study supports the European Society for Medical Oncology recommendations to increase the use of telemedicine.

The number of included patients (n=30) is small to withdraw solid conclusions and a note about the need for a larger scale study is warranted at the end of the discussion. In fact it could have been better removed from the study title.

Referring to the region of the world where the study was conducted could better be mentioned even in the study title as the feedback of those tumor patients is unique to that area and could dramatically differ if conducted in another region. In fact being performed in a rural area of Germany (as mentioned in the limitations at the end of the discussion) could have been also presented in the title.

The interview is relatively lengthy (30 minutes) and a shorter duration constructed questionnaire would allow its easier reproduction (after adjustment) for other countries.

More details on the confounding factors in favor of the detected minor effect of the pandemic on the 'anti-proliferative therapy' could be further investigated with in-depth.

An indepth analysis could be considered regarding the gender differences and the rural-urban gap as presented for patients in another field of Medicine 'Rheumatology' [2] who share similarities in the suffering and disease burden.

The introduction could be better structured with distinct paragraphs. The summary at the end of the introduction may be peculiar to present at such early stage in the article. Such wrapping up would be more suitable at the end.

The interview guide including the 28 nicely outlined questions provides a range of aspects (such as social, behavioral, medical...etc) that those patients experienced during the pandemic. Further analyses of such factors are recommended.

The reason for the 9 dropped out patients would have been of value to mention.

The results is redundant and could be better focused and wrapped up.

Tabulation of the participants' demographics is recommended. In fact demonstrating the results in suitable tables and figures is required for robust analysis.

Quoting statements from certain patients may be a point of dispersion of the findings. A compound statistical analysis of the 30 patients is encouraged.

The discussion is nicely written and concise.

References include key studies in this field however, only 25 references may be few for an original article. More references of relevance could enrich the introduction and discussion.

References:

[1] Kaiser U, Vehling-Kaiser U, Schmidt J, Hoffmann A, Kaiser F. The tumor patient in the COVID-19 pandemic—an interview-based study of 30 patients undergoing systemic antiproliferative therapy (2021). The tumor patient in the COVID-19 pandemic—an interview-based study of 30 patients undergoing systemic antiproliferative therapy. PLOS ONE 16(8):e0256047. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256047>

[2] Abualfadi E, Ismail F, Shereef RRE, Hassan E, Tharwat S, ECR COVID19-Study Group. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on rheumatoid arthritis from a Multi-Centre patient-reported questionnaire survey: influence of gender, rural-urban gap and north-south gradient. Rheumatol Int. 2021;41(2):345-353. doi: 10.1007/s00296-020-04736-9.