



## Comment on: Survey of cervical cancer survivors regarding quality of life and sexual function

Sir,

We have read with great interest, the article by Zhou *et al.*,<sup>[1]</sup> about the quality of life and sexual function in cervical cancer survivors. Cervical cancer is the twelfth most frequent cancer in women in developed countries, and patients may experience changes in their sexual functioning and quality of life (QoL) resulting from cancer itself and its treatment.<sup>[2]</sup>

For these reasons, we agree with the authors that the assessment of the sexual function and QoL of cancer patients is very important to provide them the best possible care.

Although we appreciated the reported methodology, we take the opportunity to point out several elements which would let us further realize the results of this study.

First of all, the sociocultural level of the women enrolled for this study is low and we think that this factor could influence the results because sexual function and QoL are also

influenced by social and cultural factors. Therefore, the role of sociocultural factors in influencing sexual function and QoL should be further investigated.

Second, the authors excluded from the sample, women who had mental illness or cognitive impairment; but it is not clear how the comorbidity of psychiatric disorders was evaluated since authors did not report that participants were screened by an expert psychiatrist using a structured psychiatric interview. Moreover, the authors did not exclude from the sample other organic comorbidities that could affect sexual function and QoL. According to our opinion, authors should have considered these aspects to increase the validity of their data.

Yet, the sequence and the type of combination of chemotherapy and radiotherapy were not specified. We believe that the authors should have specified this aspect because many studies about this topic have underlined that sexual function and QoL are affected by radiation therapy,

and this effect can vary if radiation is the primary therapy or it follows surgery.<sup>[3,4]</sup>

Finally, we think that it should be interesting to investigate the consequences of cervical cancer for the partners of the affected women. Indeed, the impact of cancer on partner's sexual function, partner relationship satisfaction, and general well-being within the couple influence QoL but they are less investigated in the literature, so further studies about this topic are needed.<sup>[5]</sup>

In conclusion, based on these data and our experience, we strongly suggest for further studies to exclude comorbidities that could influence the validity of the results and to investigate the influence of sociocultural factors and the consequences of cancer for the partners of the affected women.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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