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Pain has emerged as one of the leading symptoms related to cancer affecting the quality of life of patients; therefore the management of pain is a necessity in the treatment of this disease. Opioids constitute the base of the pyramid proposed by the WHO to treat moderate to severe pain.

The opioid consumption motion chart created by the International Narcotics Control board shows a consumption of morphine in Lebanon during the year of 2012 equal to (1.2085 mg/capita), which is considered very low when compared to other countries such as France (31.8543 mg/capita) and England (39.2065 mg/capita) or the United States (78.6244 mg/capita) and Canada (100.7742 mg/capita).

The number of studies discussing the limitations to opioid consumption in Lebanon is very restricted; furthermore none has a global approach to the everyday practice of pharmacies and doctors.

We conducted a descriptive study to evaluate the limitations to opioids prescription in Lebanon to cancer patients using two questionnaires: one destined to Lebanese oncologists regarding their experience with opioids in their everyday practice, another questionnaire for oncology patients to address their concerns and obstacles when it comes to opioids consumption.

A representative sample of Lebanese oncologists were chosen randomly to fill out a questionnaire regarding opioids available on the Lebanese market and the ones they use in their everyday practice; the results obtained revealed gaps in the knowledge about the different opioids available on the market as well as the way to manage "breakthrough pain". The majority of the patients who met the criteria for opioids treatment according to the WHO were not treated adequately.

We conclude that more awareness is needed in the medical training of oncologists and residents when it comes to active screening and management of pain in order to improve the quality of life of cancer patients.

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