

# Systematic Review of Caregiver Burden, Unmet Needs, and Quality of Life among Informal Caregivers with Pancreatic Cancer

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## BACKGROUND

Informal caregivers play an important supportive care role for patients with cancer. This may be especially true for pancreatic cancer which is often diagnosed late, has a poor prognosis, and is associated with a significant symptom burden. Health policies which increasingly push for shorter length of hospital stay and more outpatient care place even greater responsibility on partners and families (i.e., informal caregivers) to supplement care received from professionals. We systematically reviewed the evidence on caregiver burden, unmet needs, and quality-of-life of informal caregivers to patients with pancreatic cancer.

## METHODS

PubMed, Medline, CINAHL, and Embase databases were systematically searched on 31 August 2021. Qualitative and quantitative data on informal caregivers' experience were extracted and coded into themes of burden, unmet needs, or quality-of-life.

## RESULTS

Nine studies (five qualitative, four quantitative), including 6,023 informal caregivers, were included.

### BURDEN

Informal caregivers struggle with managing patient's symptoms

### NEEDS

Clearer communication,  
Support and briefing for caregivers,  
Help with navigating health system

### QOL

Many experiences anxiety (33%) or depression (12%-32%)

## CONCLUSION

High quality pancreatic cancer care should consider the impacts of informal caregiving. Prospective longitudinal studies examining multiple dimensions of caregiver burden, needs, and quality-of-life would be valuable at informing supportive care cancer delivery to pancreatic cancer informal caregivers.