Background

Early lung cancer became the most common cancer in the worldwide and most of them have psychological problems (anxiety and depression) in recent years. However, few studies were discussed about fear of cancer recurrence (FCR) in the patients after surgery.

Objective

The aim of this study was to explore experiences and related factors of FCR in early-stage lung cancer patients in Taiwan.

Methods

A cross-sectional correlation study was conducted and total 140 early stage (stage I-3A) lung cancer patients were recruited in outpatient center after post-surgery. We measured by the structure questionnaires including the Karnofsky performance score (KPS), Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), and Fear of Cancer Recurrence Inventory-Severity and Coping Strategies subscale (FCRI). Using independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to identify the significant factors were related to FCR.

Results

On average, the patients (n=140) who did not reveal anxiety or depression problems, but reported the high risk of FCR (mean score: 13.9±6.2). The top severe item in FCRI-Severity was “I think it’s normal to be anxious or worried about the PCR”. Anxiety and depression were significantly associated with more severity of FCR. The most commonly used of coping strategy was “I try to convince myself that everything will be fine or I think positively”. Nearly half of the patients expressed that the FCR have been eliminated through what the strategy they adopted.

Conclusions

Psychological distress (anxiety and depression) were the important factors which associated with FCR severity, even though the patients who had well psychological status and physical function were not mean that they without FCR problem. In future, the rapid of convenience and brief assessment have to develop and practice in clinical practice, and giving tailored intervention to the patients with higher levels of FCR.