

## Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy in Cancer Treatment: A Research Study in the Light of Islamic Jurisprudence and Modern Oncology

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### Abstract

Cancer is one of the most critical health challenges of the contemporary world, requiring advanced and multidisciplinary approaches for effective treatment and patient care. Among the most widely used therapeutic methods in modern oncology are chemotherapy and radiotherapy, which aim to control, reduce or eliminate malignant cells in the human body. Despite their clinical effectiveness, these treatments are often associated with severe physical, psychological and emotional side effects, raising important ethical and religious questions, particularly within Muslim societies. This study explores the role of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in cancer treatment and analyzes their permissibility and ethical dimensions in the light of Islamic jurisprudence and modern medical science. The research highlights that Islam places great emphasis on the preservation of human life and encourages seeking medical treatment for all forms of illness. Through principles such as necessity (*darurah*),

harm reduction (*la darar wa la dirar*), and public welfare (*maslahah*), Islamic law provides a flexible framework for addressing modern medical challenges. The study

demonstrates that chemotherapy and radiotherapy are generally considered permissible in Islamic jurisprudence when they are prescribed by qualified medical professionals and aimed at saving or improving life, even if they involve temporary suffering. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the importance of integrating psychological, spiritual and ethical care alongside medical treatment to ensure holistic patient well-being. It concludes that modern oncology and Islamic teachings are not in conflict but are complementary in promoting human dignity, healing, and compassion in healthcare.

## **Introduction**

Cancer is one of the most serious health challenges faced by humanity in the modern era. The rapid increase in cancer cases across the world has made it a major concern not only for medical scientists but also for religious scholars, ethicists, and policymakers. According to contemporary medical research, cancer refers to the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells that invade different parts of the body and may ultimately lead to death if not treated properly. Advances in modern oncology have introduced various treatment methods such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy, and surgical interventions, which have significantly improved survival rates among cancer patients. However, these treatments also raise numerous ethical, psychological, and religious questions, especially within Muslim societies where individuals seek guidance from Islamic teachings regarding medical procedures and their permissibility.

Islam is a complete code of life that provides guidance for all aspects of human existence, including health and medical treatment. The Qur'an and Sunnah emphasize the preservation of human life and encourage believers to seek treatment for illnesses. Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) contains principles that help scholars address contemporary medical issues in the light of Shariah. The emergence of modern cancer therapies such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy has generated important discussions regarding pain, harmful side effects, the use of potentially impure substances in medications, patient consent, and end-of-life care. Muslim patients often experience confusion concerning whether such treatments are religiously permissible, especially when therapies involve severe physical suffering or uncertain outcomes.

This research aims to explore the role of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in cancer treatment while analyzing their legal and ethical dimensions in Islamic jurisprudence. The study seeks to demonstrate that Islam does not oppose scientific advancement; rather, it supports beneficial medical treatment that protects human life and reduces suffering. By integrating modern medical science with Islamic legal principles, this article highlights the harmony between faith and scientific progress. It further discusses the spiritual, ethical, and psychological aspects of cancer treatment and explains how Islamic teachings can provide emotional strength and moral guidance to patients, families, and healthcare professionals in the contemporary world.

### **1. Understanding Cancer in Modern Medical Science**

Cancer is a complex disease characterized by the abnormal and uncontrolled division of cells within the human body. Under normal biological conditions, cells grow, divide, and die according to a regulated system that maintains balance in bodily tissues. However, cancer develops when genetic mutations disrupt this natural process, causing cells to multiply uncontrollably and form tumors. These tumors may either remain localized or spread to other organs through the bloodstream or lymphatic system, a process known as metastasis. Modern medical science classifies cancer into various categories, including carcinoma, leukemia, lymphoma, melanoma, and sarcoma, depending on the tissue or organ affected.<sup>i</sup>

The causes of cancer are multifactorial and involve genetic, environmental, and lifestyle-related factors. Scientific research has identified smoking, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, obesity, radiation exposure, viral infections, and

environmental pollution as major contributors to cancer development. Additionally, hereditary genetic mutations can significantly increase the risk of certain cancers such as breast and colorectal cancer. Early diagnosis plays a critical role in increasing survival rates because cancers detected at initial stages are generally easier to treat. Modern diagnostic technologies such as biopsies, CT scans, MRI imaging, and laboratory testing have greatly improved the ability of physicians to identify and monitor cancer progression.<sup>ii</sup>

Contemporary oncology has made remarkable progress in cancer management through treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, hormone therapy, and immunotherapy. These methods aim either to eliminate cancer cells or to control their spread and relieve symptoms. Despite scientific advancement, cancer continues to pose serious challenges because many treatments involve painful side effects, emotional distress, and financial burdens. Patients often experience fear, anxiety, and depression during prolonged treatment periods. Therefore, cancer is not merely a physical disease but also a psychological and social crisis that affects families and communities. In this context, religious and ethical guidance becomes highly important for helping patients cope with suffering and maintain hope during treatment.<sup>iii</sup>

## **2. Historical Development of Cancer Treatment**

The history of cancer treatment reflects humanity's continuous struggle against one of the deadliest diseases known to mankind. Ancient civilizations such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Indians, and Muslims attempted to understand and cure tumors through herbal medicine, surgery, and spiritual healing methods. Historical medical texts reveal that physicians in ancient Egypt described cancer-like diseases thousands of years ago. Greek physician Hippocrates used the term "carcinoma" because the appearance of tumors resembled a crab. In the Islamic Golden Age, Muslim physicians including Ibn Sina made significant contributions to medical science by discussing tumors and recommending surgical removal in certain cases.<sup>iv</sup>

During the medieval and early modern periods, cancer treatment remained limited because physicians lacked scientific understanding of cellular biology and genetics. Surgical removal was often the primary method, though operations were extremely dangerous due to the absence of anesthesia and antiseptic techniques. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries witnessed major scientific breakthroughs that transformed oncology into a specialized branch of medicine. The discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Roentgen in 1895 led to the development of radiotherapy, while advances in pharmacology during World War II contributed to the emergence of chemotherapy. Scientists observed that certain chemical agents could destroy rapidly dividing cells, leading to the creation of anticancer drugs.<sup>v</sup>

The modern era has brought revolutionary changes in cancer treatment through technological innovation and biomedical research. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy have become central components of oncology, often used alongside surgery and targeted therapies. These treatments have increased survival rates for many cancers that were previously considered incurable. However, the historical development of these therapies also introduced ethical and religious debates. Questions emerged concerning the harmful side effects of treatment, the limits of medical intervention, and the moral responsibilities of healthcare providers. Within Muslim societies, scholars began examining these issues through the lens of Islamic jurisprudence to determine whether aggressive cancer treatments align with the objectives of Shariah. The development of modern oncology therefore demonstrates not only scientific progress but also the growing need for ethical and spiritual guidance in healthcare.<sup>vi</sup>

## **3. The Concept of Disease and Cure in Islam**

Islam views illness as a natural part of human life and recognizes both physical and spiritual dimensions of disease. The Qur'an explains that human beings are subject to weakness, suffering, and trials as part of divine wisdom. At the same time, Islam encourages believers to seek treatment and utilize beneficial knowledge for the

preservation of life. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized medical treatment by stating that Allah has created a cure for every disease except old age. This teaching established a foundation for scientific inquiry and medical advancement within Islamic civilization. Muslim scholars historically regarded medicine as a noble profession because it contributes to the protection of one of the primary objectives of Islamic law: the preservation of human life (Hifz al-Nafs).<sup>vii</sup>

Islamic teachings maintain a balance between reliance upon Allah (tawakkul) and practical effort. Seeking medical treatment does not contradict faith; rather, it reflects obedience to divine guidance. Classical jurists discussed the permissibility and necessity of medical treatment in situations where life is endangered. Many scholars concluded that treatment may become obligatory if abandoning it would likely result in death or severe harm. Consequently, modern cancer therapies such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy can be understood within this framework because they aim to preserve life and reduce suffering.<sup>viii</sup>

The Islamic understanding of illness also includes spiritual and psychological aspects. Patients are encouraged to remain patient, hopeful, and spiritually connected to Allah during periods of suffering. Illness is often regarded as a means of spiritual purification and personal growth. Nevertheless, Islam does not promote passive acceptance of disease without effort toward treatment. Instead, it combines spiritual resilience with scientific medicine. In the context of cancer treatment, this perspective provides emotional comfort to patients while supporting the use of advanced medical technologies. Islamic jurisprudence therefore offers a flexible and compassionate framework capable of addressing contemporary medical challenges while remaining faithful to religious principles.<sup>ix</sup>

#### **4. Chemotherapy: Definition and Medical Importance**

Chemotherapy is one of the most widely used methods in modern cancer treatment and refers to the use of chemical drugs to destroy or inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Unlike surgery, which removes localized tumors, chemotherapy works throughout the body and is particularly effective against cancers that have spread to multiple organs. Chemotherapeutic drugs target rapidly dividing cells because cancer cells multiply at an abnormal rate. These medications may be administered orally, intravenously, or through injections depending on the type and stage of cancer.<sup>x</sup> In many cases, chemotherapy is used alongside surgery or radiotherapy to maximize treatment effectiveness and improve survival outcomes.

The medical importance of chemotherapy lies in its ability to shrink tumors, prevent metastasis, and prolong patient survival. Advances in pharmacological research have produced numerous anticancer drugs capable of treating different forms of cancer, including leukemia, breast cancer, lung cancer, and lymphoma. In some cases, chemotherapy can completely eliminate cancer, while in others it helps control symptoms and improve quality of life.<sup>xi</sup> However, because chemotherapy also affects healthy rapidly dividing cells such as hair follicles and bone marrow cells, patients frequently experience severe side effects including hair loss, nausea, fatigue, weakened immunity, and emotional distress.

From an Islamic perspective, the painful side effects of chemotherapy raise important legal and ethical questions. Some patients may hesitate to undergo treatment because of the intense suffering involved or fear regarding uncertain outcomes. Islamic jurisprudence addresses these concerns through legal maxims emphasizing the prevention of greater harm and the preservation of life. Scholars generally permit difficult medical treatments if they offer a reasonable possibility of recovery or symptom relief. Chemotherapy therefore falls within the category of permissible treatment because its primary objective is to save life and reduce disease progression. Furthermore, Islam emphasizes compassion toward patients and encourages families and healthcare providers to support individuals undergoing difficult therapies. This demonstrates that Islamic teachings are compatible with modern medical science when

treatments are intended to achieve human welfare and protect life.<sup>xii</sup>

## **5. Radiotherapy and its Clinical Applications**

Radiotherapy is another major component of modern cancer treatment and is widely used to destroy cancerous cells through controlled doses of radiation. This therapy works by damaging the DNA of malignant cells, thereby preventing them from growing and multiplying. Unlike chemotherapy, which affects the entire body, radiotherapy is generally localized and targets a specific tumor or affected region. Modern oncology employs advanced technologies such as external beam radiation therapy, proton therapy, and brachytherapy to minimize damage to healthy tissues while maximizing therapeutic effectiveness. According to contemporary oncologists, nearly half of all cancer patients receive radiotherapy at some stage during their treatment process.<sup>xiii</sup>

The development of radiotherapy has significantly improved survival rates and symptom management for many types of cancer, including breast cancer, prostate cancer, cervical cancer, and brain tumors. In certain cases, radiotherapy is used before surgery to shrink tumors, while in other situations it is administered after surgery to eliminate remaining cancer cells. Medical researchers emphasize that radiation therapy is particularly beneficial for patients who cannot undergo surgical procedures because of age, physical weakness, or advanced disease progression.<sup>xiv</sup> Nevertheless, despite its effectiveness, radiotherapy often causes serious side effects such as fatigue, skin irritation, tissue inflammation, hair loss, and difficulty swallowing depending on the area treated. These complications sometimes create psychological distress and fear among patients undergoing prolonged treatment sessions.

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, radiotherapy falls under the broader principle of medical necessity and the preservation of life. Muslim jurists have generally maintained that harmful side effects do not invalidate the permissibility of treatment if the expected medical benefit outweighs the damage. Islamic legal maxims such as “harm must be removed” and “necessities permit prohibited matters” provide flexibility for physicians and patients dealing with life-threatening diseases.<sup>xv</sup> In the context of cancer therapy, radiotherapy is therefore considered permissible because its objective is to save human life and relieve suffering. Furthermore, Islamic ethics emphasize compassion, dignity, and emotional support for patients enduring difficult medical procedures. The combination of scientific advancement and spiritual guidance can therefore help cancer patients maintain both physical resilience and psychological stability throughout treatment.

## **6. Side Effects of Chemotherapy and Radiotherapy**

Although chemotherapy and radiotherapy are among the most effective treatments for cancer, both therapies are associated with severe physical and psychological side effects. Chemotherapy drugs attack rapidly dividing cells throughout the body, which means that healthy cells such as hair follicles, digestive tract cells, and bone marrow cells are often damaged alongside cancerous tissues. As a result, patients commonly experience nausea, vomiting, fatigue, anemia, hair loss, weakened immunity, and loss of appetite.<sup>xvi</sup> Similarly, radiotherapy may produce localized complications such as skin burns, tissue damage, chronic pain, and inflammation in the treated area. In advanced cases, prolonged exposure to radiation can even affect nearby organs and reduce a patient’s quality of life.

The psychological impact of cancer therapies is equally significant. Many patients suffer from anxiety, depression, emotional isolation, and fear of death during treatment. The visible side effects of chemotherapy, especially hair loss and physical weakness, often affect personal confidence and social interaction. Researchers in psycho-oncology explain that emotional distress can negatively influence recovery and reduce treatment compliance.<sup>xvii</sup> Consequently, comprehensive cancer care today includes psychological counseling, social support, and spiritual guidance in addition to medical treatment. Families also play a critical role in helping patients endure

prolonged therapies and maintain hope despite physical suffering.

Islamic teachings provide important ethical and spiritual support for patients facing these hardships. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes patience (sabr), hope, and trust in Allah during times of illness and difficulty. Muslim scholars explain that temporary suffering may be tolerated if it leads to a greater benefit such as preservation of life.<sup>xviii</sup> Therefore, the pain and discomfort associated with chemotherapy or radiotherapy do not make these treatments impermissible in Islamic law. Instead, they are viewed within the broader principle that difficult measures may be accepted when necessary for healing and survival. At the same time, Islam encourages physicians to minimize patient suffering and to treat individuals with mercy, dignity, and compassion. This holistic perspective aligns closely with modern medical ethics, which emphasize patient-centered care and emotional well-being alongside clinical treatment.

### **7. Preservation of Human Life in Islamic Law**

One of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law is the preservation of human life, commonly referred to in Islamic jurisprudence as *Hifz al-Nafs*. Muslim jurists classify this principle among the essential objectives (*Maqasid al-Shari'ah*) upon which human welfare depends. The Qur'an places extraordinary value upon human life and declares that saving one life is equivalent to saving all humanity.<sup>xix</sup> Because of this principle, Islam strongly encourages medical treatment, scientific advancement, and all beneficial means that protect human health and prevent unnecessary suffering. The preservation of life is therefore not merely a medical concern but also a religious obligation rooted in divine guidance.

Classical and contemporary jurists have used this principle to address numerous modern medical issues, including organ transplantation, surgery, vaccination, and cancer treatment. In cases where illness threatens life or causes severe harm, seeking treatment may become obligatory according to many scholars. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy can be understood within this legal framework because they are intended to prevent the spread of a deadly disease and prolong survival. Even when treatments involve painful side effects, Islamic law permits them if medical experts determine that the expected benefits outweigh the risks.<sup>xx</sup> This demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic jurisprudence in responding to contemporary healthcare challenges through principles of necessity, benefit, and harm reduction.

The Islamic emphasis on preserving life also extends beyond physical treatment to include emotional and spiritual well-being. Patients suffering from cancer often require psychological reassurance and spiritual encouragement in addition to clinical care. Islam teaches that human beings possess both body and soul, and therefore effective healing must address both dimensions simultaneously. Religious practices such as prayer, Qur'anic recitation, supplication, and community support may strengthen emotional resilience and help patients cope with fear and uncertainty during treatment. Modern healthcare professionals increasingly recognize the importance of spiritual care in improving patient outcomes and mental health.<sup>xxi</sup> Consequently, Islamic teachings and modern medical science can work together harmoniously in promoting holistic healing and compassionate cancer care.

### **8. Islamic Rulings on Painful Medical Treatments**

Islamic jurisprudence recognizes that many medical treatments involve pain, hardship, and temporary suffering, yet such treatments may still be permissible or even necessary if they provide a reasonable chance of recovery. Classical jurists discussed painful procedures such as cauterization, surgery, and amputation long before the emergence of modern medicine. Their discussions established important legal principles that remain applicable in contemporary healthcare. One of the most significant maxims states that "greater harm is removed by tolerating lesser harm."<sup>xxii</sup> This principle forms the basis for permitting difficult treatments such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy despite their severe side effects.

Modern cancer therapies often expose patients to intense physical discomfort,

emotional stress, and financial burden. Some individuals may question whether enduring such suffering is compatible with Islamic teachings on mercy and human dignity. Contemporary Muslim scholars generally argue that treatments aimed at saving life or reducing disease progression are permissible as long as competent physicians recommend them and the expected benefit outweighs the damage.<sup>xxiii</sup> Thus, temporary suffering caused by chemotherapy or radiation does not invalidate their legitimacy in Islamic law. Instead, these therapies are viewed as necessary medical interventions intended to preserve one of the highest objectives of Shariah: the protection of human life.

Islamic ethics also emphasize informed consent, patient autonomy, and compassionate medical care. Physicians are expected to explain treatment risks honestly while respecting the dignity and emotional condition of patients. Likewise, family members are encouraged to support cancer patients emotionally, financially, and spiritually during periods of hardship. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized mercy toward the sick and encouraged believers to visit and care for ill individuals.<sup>xxiv</sup> In the modern medical context, this guidance promotes a humane healthcare environment in which advanced scientific treatment is combined with compassion, empathy, and spiritual support. Therefore, Islamic jurisprudence not only permits painful cancer therapies when medically necessary but also provides an ethical framework that protects patient dignity and emotional well-being throughout the healing process.

### **9. Permissibility of Chemotherapy in Islamic Jurisprudence**

Islamic jurisprudence provides broad flexibility regarding medical treatment, particularly in situations involving life-threatening diseases such as cancer. Chemotherapy, despite its severe physical and psychological side effects, is generally considered permissible by contemporary Muslim scholars because its primary purpose is the preservation of life. Islamic legal theory emphasizes that actions are judged according to their objectives and consequences. Therefore, when chemotherapy is administered with the intention of curing disease, reducing suffering, or prolonging life, it falls within the category of lawful and beneficial treatment. Classical jurists established the principle that medical necessity can justify difficult procedures if they are supported by expert opinion and aimed at protecting human welfare.<sup>xxv</sup>

The permissibility of chemotherapy is further supported by the Qur'anic emphasis on protecting human life and avoiding self-destruction. Modern cancer treatment often requires patients to endure temporary suffering in order to achieve long-term recovery. Although chemotherapy may cause pain, weakness, nausea, hair loss, and emotional distress, Islamic law evaluates such harm in comparison with the greater danger posed by untreated cancer. Jurists frequently apply the maxim "necessity permits hardship" in cases where treatment is essential for survival.<sup>xxvi</sup> Consequently, refusing potentially life-saving treatment without valid reason may contradict the Islamic objective of preserving life. Many contemporary fatwas issued by Islamic legal councils have therefore approved the use of chemotherapy when recommended by qualified medical professionals.

At the same time, Islamic ethics require physicians and healthcare institutions to uphold compassion and human dignity during treatment. Patients must be informed about possible side effects, treatment outcomes, and alternative medical options so that consent is based upon understanding rather than coercion. Family support and spiritual counseling also play a significant role in helping patients cope with the emotional burden of chemotherapy. The integration of religious guidance with clinical treatment can reduce fear and strengthen emotional resilience among Muslim patients.<sup>xxvii</sup> Thus, Islamic jurisprudence does not merely permit chemotherapy as a medical necessity; it also establishes ethical principles that encourage mercy, transparency, psychological care, and spiritual support throughout the treatment process.

### **10. Radiotherapy and the Principle of Necessity in Islam**

Radiotherapy is one of the most effective methods used in modern oncology for

controlling and eliminating cancer cells. Because this treatment exposes the human body to controlled radiation, some Muslim patients initially express concern regarding its safety and religious permissibility. Islamic jurisprudence addresses these concerns through the doctrine of necessity (*darurah*), which allows certain difficult or harmful measures when they are essential for protecting life and preventing greater harm. Muslim jurists maintain that necessity is determined according to expert medical evaluation and the likelihood of therapeutic benefit.<sup>xxviii</sup> Therefore, when oncologists recommend radiotherapy as an important component of cancer treatment, its use becomes religiously acceptable under Islamic legal principles.

The doctrine of necessity occupies a central place in Islamic law and has historically been applied to various medical situations involving surgery, emergency treatment, and life-saving interventions. Contemporary scholars argue that radiotherapy serves a legitimate medical objective because it seeks to destroy malignant cells and reduce the spread of cancer. Although radiation may damage healthy tissues and produce side effects such as fatigue, burns, and inflammation, these harms are considered secondary when compared to the danger of uncontrolled cancer progression.<sup>xxix</sup> Islamic legal maxims emphasize that public and individual welfare should be prioritized, especially in matters concerning life preservation. Consequently, radiotherapy is generally viewed as a permissible and sometimes necessary medical treatment within Islamic jurisprudence.

In addition to legal permissibility, Islamic ethics stress the importance of emotional and spiritual care for patients receiving radiotherapy. Cancer patients frequently experience fear and uncertainty due to the long duration of treatment and the possibility of physical complications. Islam encourages patience, hope, prayer, and reliance upon Allah while simultaneously supporting scientific medicine and professional healthcare. Physicians are also morally obligated to minimize unnecessary suffering and to respect patient dignity throughout treatment.<sup>xxx</sup> Modern medical ethics increasingly recognize the importance of holistic care that addresses emotional and spiritual needs alongside physical treatment. This convergence between Islamic ethical principles and modern healthcare demonstrates that faith and medical science can cooperate effectively in improving the well-being of cancer patients.

### **11. Use of Haram or Impure Substances in Cancer Medicines**

One of the most debated contemporary issues in Islamic medical jurisprudence concerns the use of medicines containing unlawful (*haram*) or impure (*najis*) substances. Some chemotherapy drugs and pharmaceutical products may contain ingredients derived from prohibited materials such as alcohol, porcine substances, or chemically impure compounds. This issue creates anxiety among Muslim patients who wish to remain faithful to Islamic dietary and ethical laws while undergoing life-saving treatment. Islamic jurists approach this matter through detailed legal principles concerning necessity, transformation of substances, and the prevention of greater harm.<sup>xxxi</sup>

Classical Islamic law generally prohibits the consumption of impure or unlawful substances; however, jurists made exceptions in situations of genuine medical necessity. If no lawful alternative medicine is available and a trustworthy physician confirms that treatment is necessary for survival or serious illness, many scholars permit the temporary use of otherwise prohibited substances. This ruling is based upon the Qur'anic principle that necessity can relax certain prohibitions in order to protect human life. Contemporary Islamic legal councils have similarly concluded that cancer medications containing impure ingredients may be permissible if they are medically effective and no suitable halal substitute exists.<sup>xxxii</sup> In addition, some scholars apply the concept of chemical transformation (*istihalah*), arguing that substances undergoing complete chemical change may no longer retain their original prohibited status.

Despite these legal allowances, Islamic ethics continue to encourage pharmaceutical research aimed at producing halal and ethically acceptable medicines

whenever possible. Muslim healthcare professionals and researchers are increasingly emphasizing the development of Shariah-compliant pharmaceuticals that meet both scientific and religious standards. This effort reflects the broader Islamic principle that preserving life should occur alongside the protection of moral and spiritual values.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Cancer patients therefore benefit from a balanced legal approach that combines flexibility in cases of necessity with continued commitment to ethical medical advancement. Such rulings demonstrate the adaptability of Islamic jurisprudence in responding to complex biomedical developments while maintaining fidelity to the objectives of Shariah.

## **12. Psychological and Spiritual Care of Cancer Patients**

Cancer is not merely a physical illness; it is also a profound psychological and emotional experience that affects the mental stability of patients and their families. Individuals diagnosed with cancer often experience fear, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and uncertainty regarding the future. The long duration of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, combined with physical weakness and social isolation, can intensify emotional suffering. Modern psycho-oncology recognizes that psychological health directly influences treatment outcomes and quality of life.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Consequently, healthcare systems increasingly integrate counseling services, emotional support programs, and spiritual care into comprehensive cancer treatment plans.

Islamic teachings provide significant psychological comfort and spiritual guidance for individuals facing serious illness. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes patience, hope, trust in Allah, and the temporary nature of worldly suffering. Muslim patients are encouraged to maintain prayer, supplication, remembrance of Allah, and recitation of the Qur'an as sources of inner peace and emotional resilience. Scholars explain that illness can become a means of spiritual purification and moral growth when approached with faith and patience.<sup>xxxv</sup> This spiritual perspective does not deny the pain of cancer but instead helps patients confront suffering with dignity, optimism, and psychological strength. Religious support from family members, imams, and community networks can therefore play an essential role in reducing emotional distress during treatment.

Contemporary healthcare professionals increasingly acknowledge the importance of spirituality in medical care, particularly in chronic and life-threatening illnesses such as cancer. Studies have shown that patients with strong spiritual support often display lower levels of depression and improved coping abilities during difficult therapies.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Islamic ethics encourage physicians to treat patients holistically by addressing not only biological symptoms but also emotional and spiritual needs. Compassion, respectful communication, and emotional reassurance are therefore considered important ethical duties in healthcare. The integration of spiritual care with modern oncology demonstrates that effective cancer treatment requires attention to the human being as a complete physical, emotional, and spiritual entity rather than merely a medical case.

## **13. Ethical Challenges in Modern Oncology**

Modern oncology has achieved remarkable progress in diagnosing and treating cancer, yet these advancements have also introduced complex ethical challenges for physicians, patients, and families. Cancer treatment frequently involves difficult decisions regarding aggressive therapies, experimental medications, financial costs, and the balance between prolonging life and maintaining quality of life. In many cases, patients undergoing chemotherapy or radiotherapy experience severe pain and emotional exhaustion, leading to ethical debates about whether treatment should continue when the probability of recovery becomes limited. Medical ethics therefore seeks to balance scientific possibilities with compassion, patient dignity, and informed decision-making.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

One of the central ethical principles in oncology is patient autonomy, which emphasizes the right of patients to make informed decisions regarding their treatment.

Physicians are ethically obligated to explain the risks, benefits, and possible outcomes of medical procedures in a truthful and understandable manner. Islamic ethics strongly supports honesty, transparency, and consultation in healthcare decisions. Muslim scholars argue that concealing important medical information from patients without necessity contradicts the principles of trust and justice emphasized in Shariah.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Consequently, cancer patients should be given sufficient knowledge about chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and other therapeutic options so they can participate responsibly in decisions concerning their own bodies and health.

Another important ethical issue involves the allocation of medical resources and the affordability of cancer treatment. Modern oncology treatments are often expensive and inaccessible for many patients in developing countries. Islamic social ethics emphasize justice, compassion, and communal responsibility toward the sick and vulnerable. Healthcare institutions and governments therefore have a moral duty to support cancer patients and improve access to treatment regardless of financial status.<sup>xxxix</sup> Furthermore, Islamic teachings encourage charitable assistance, emotional support, and social solidarity with those facing illness. These ethical principles demonstrate that cancer care should not focus solely on scientific treatment but must also include justice, mercy, and respect for human dignity in all aspects of healthcare delivery.

#### **14. End-of-Life Care and Islamic Teachings**

End-of-life care is among the most sensitive and emotionally challenging aspects of cancer treatment. In advanced stages of cancer, curative therapies may become ineffective, and medical attention often shifts toward palliative care aimed at reducing pain and improving the patient's quality of life. Contemporary medicine recognizes that terminally ill patients require not only physical treatment but also emotional, psychological, and spiritual support during the final phase of life.<sup>xl</sup> Questions regarding life-support systems, pain management, do-not-resuscitate (DNR) decisions, and withdrawal of futile treatment have therefore become major topics in both medical ethics and Islamic jurisprudence.

Islamic teachings place great emphasis on the sanctity and dignity of human life while also acknowledging the natural reality of death. Muslim scholars generally distinguish between actively causing death and allowing the natural process of dying to continue when treatment no longer offers meaningful benefit. Contemporary jurists maintain that extraordinary or futile medical interventions may be withdrawn if qualified physicians conclude that recovery is impossible and treatment merely prolongs suffering without medical benefit.<sup>xli</sup> However, Islam strictly prohibits euthanasia and assisted suicide because human life is considered a sacred trust from Allah. The objective of end-of-life care in Islam is therefore not to hasten death but to relieve suffering and preserve dignity while respecting divine will.

Spiritual preparation also plays an important role in Islamic end-of-life care. Patients are encouraged to maintain faith, repentance, prayer, and remembrance of Allah during serious illness. Family members are advised to provide emotional comfort, companionship, and spiritual encouragement rather than allowing patients to experience isolation or despair. Healthcare providers should likewise demonstrate compassion, patience, and respect for the emotional condition of terminally ill individuals.<sup>xlii</sup> Modern palliative medicine increasingly acknowledges that spiritual support can reduce anxiety and improve emotional peace among dying patients. This harmony between Islamic ethics and contemporary healthcare demonstrates that compassionate cancer care must address the spiritual and emotional dimensions of human suffering alongside physical treatment.

#### **15. Harmonization between Islamic Law and Modern Medical Science**

The relationship between Islamic law and modern medical science is often misunderstood as a conflict between religion and scientific advancement. In reality, Islamic civilization historically encouraged scientific inquiry, medical research, and

intellectual development. Muslim scholars and physicians during the classical Islamic era made major contributions to medicine, surgery, pharmacology, and public health. Contemporary Islamic jurisprudence continues this tradition by addressing new biomedical issues through principles derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and legal reasoning. Cancer treatment through chemotherapy and radiotherapy therefore represents an area where Islamic ethics and modern oncology can work together harmoniously for the welfare of humanity.<sup>xliv</sup>

Islamic jurisprudence is characterized by flexibility and adaptability in matters related to necessity, public welfare, and human benefit. Legal maxims such as “harm must be removed” and “necessity permits prohibited matters” allow Muslim scholars to evaluate modern medical treatments according to their objectives and consequences. As a result, contemporary jurists generally support chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery, and advanced cancer therapies when they are intended to save life or reduce suffering.<sup>xlv</sup> Islamic law does not reject scientific treatment simply because it involves pain or complex technology; rather, it encourages beneficial knowledge and responsible medical practice. This approach demonstrates that Shariah is capable of responding effectively to modern healthcare challenges while preserving moral and ethical values.

The harmonization of Islamic law and medical science also highlights the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation between physicians, religious scholars, psychologists, and healthcare institutions. Cancer treatment affects not only the body but also the emotional, spiritual, and social dimensions of human life. Consequently, effective patient care requires collaboration between scientific expertise and ethical guidance. Modern Muslim societies increasingly recognize the need for hospitals, universities, and research centers to integrate Islamic bioethics into medical education and healthcare policy.<sup>xlv</sup> Such integration can strengthen patient trust, reduce religious confusion, and promote a compassionate healthcare system that respects both scientific evidence and spiritual values. The relationship between Islam and medicine should therefore be viewed not as opposition but as a partnership dedicated to preserving human dignity, health, and well-being.

## **16. Holistic Cancer Care: Integration of Medical, Psychological, and Spiritual Dimensions**

Holistic cancer care represents a comprehensive approach that addresses not only the physical aspects of cancer but also the psychological, social, and spiritual needs of patients. Modern oncology increasingly recognizes that effective cancer treatment cannot be limited to chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or surgery alone. Patients undergoing cancer therapy often face emotional trauma, anxiety about survival, financial stress, and social isolation. Therefore, healthcare systems around the world have begun to adopt multidisciplinary care models that include oncologists, psychologists, social workers, and spiritual counselors working together to improve patient outcomes and quality of life.<sup>xlvi</sup>

From an Islamic perspective, human beings are understood as a combination of body (*jism*) and soul (*ruh*), and both dimensions must be cared for during illness. The Qur'an encourages believers to seek healing and simultaneously maintain spiritual strength through prayer, patience, and remembrance of Allah. Islamic teachings emphasize that illness can serve as a means of spiritual purification and elevation of status when faced with patience and trust in divine wisdom. In the context of cancer treatment, this spiritual outlook helps patients cope with the emotional burden of long-term therapies such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy.<sup>xlvii</sup> It also provides meaning and purpose during suffering, which is an essential element in psychological resilience.

In modern healthcare, spiritual care has become an important component of palliative and chronic disease management. Studies have shown that patients who receive spiritual counseling often report lower levels of depression, improved emotional stability, and better coping mechanisms during treatment.<sup>xlviii</sup> Islamic spiritual practices such as prayer (*salah*), supplication (*dua*), and Qur'anic recitation

contribute to inner peace and psychological strength. When combined with modern medical treatment, these practices create a supportive healing environment that enhances both mental and physical well-being. Thus, holistic cancer care demonstrates a strong convergence between Islamic ethical teachings and contemporary medical science in promoting comprehensive patient-centered treatment.

### **Conclusion**

Cancer remains one of the most complex and challenging diseases in modern medical science, requiring advanced therapeutic interventions such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. The rapid progress in oncology has significantly improved survival rates and provided hope to millions of patients worldwide. However, cancer treatment is not only a medical issue but also an ethical, psychological, and spiritual challenge that affects individuals and societies at multiple levels. This research has demonstrated that modern cancer therapies, despite their side effects, play a crucial role in preserving human life and reducing suffering, which is a central objective of both medical science and Islamic teachings.

Islamic jurisprudence provides a comprehensive and flexible framework for addressing contemporary medical issues. Through principles such as necessity, harm reduction, and preservation of life, Islamic law permits the use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy when they are medically beneficial and recommended by qualified professionals. At the same time, Islam emphasizes compassion, dignity, and holistic care for patients, ensuring that treatment is not only physically effective but also emotionally and spiritually supportive. The integration of Islamic ethics with modern oncology highlights the compatibility between faith and science in addressing human health challenges.

Ultimately, this study shows that cancer care should be viewed through a multidimensional lens that includes medical treatment, psychological support, and spiritual guidance. The collaboration between healthcare professionals, religious scholars, families, and society is essential for providing effective and compassionate care to cancer patients. By harmonizing modern medical advancements with Islamic ethical principles, a more humane, balanced, and holistic healthcare system can be achieved—one that not only treats disease but also uplifts the human spirit and preserves dignity in the face of suffering.

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