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Quality of life in patients with advanced cancer:

Critical evaluation of EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL and the FACIT-PAL-14 in prospective studies

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Introduction

In patients without a curative treatment options, health-related quality of life (HR-QoL) is essential.

Two validated **HR-QoL tools** are available for patients with advanced cancer:

(1) FACIT-Pal-14

Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Palliative

(2) EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL

European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 15 Palliative Care

Methods

Systematic search of CINAHL, The Cochrane Library, EMBASE, and MEDLINE(R)ALL according to PRISMA guidelines.

- Search period: January 2006 to August 2024
- Language: English
- Inclusion: Use of ≥1 predefined HR-QoL instrument in advanced cancer
- Data extracted: study design, year and country of publication, number of patients included, type of malignancy, questionnaire used, study settings, and completion and adherence data with reasons for attrition

Aim

Evaluate **the use** of
EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL and **FACIT-Pal-14**
in prospective studies in patients with advanced cancer.

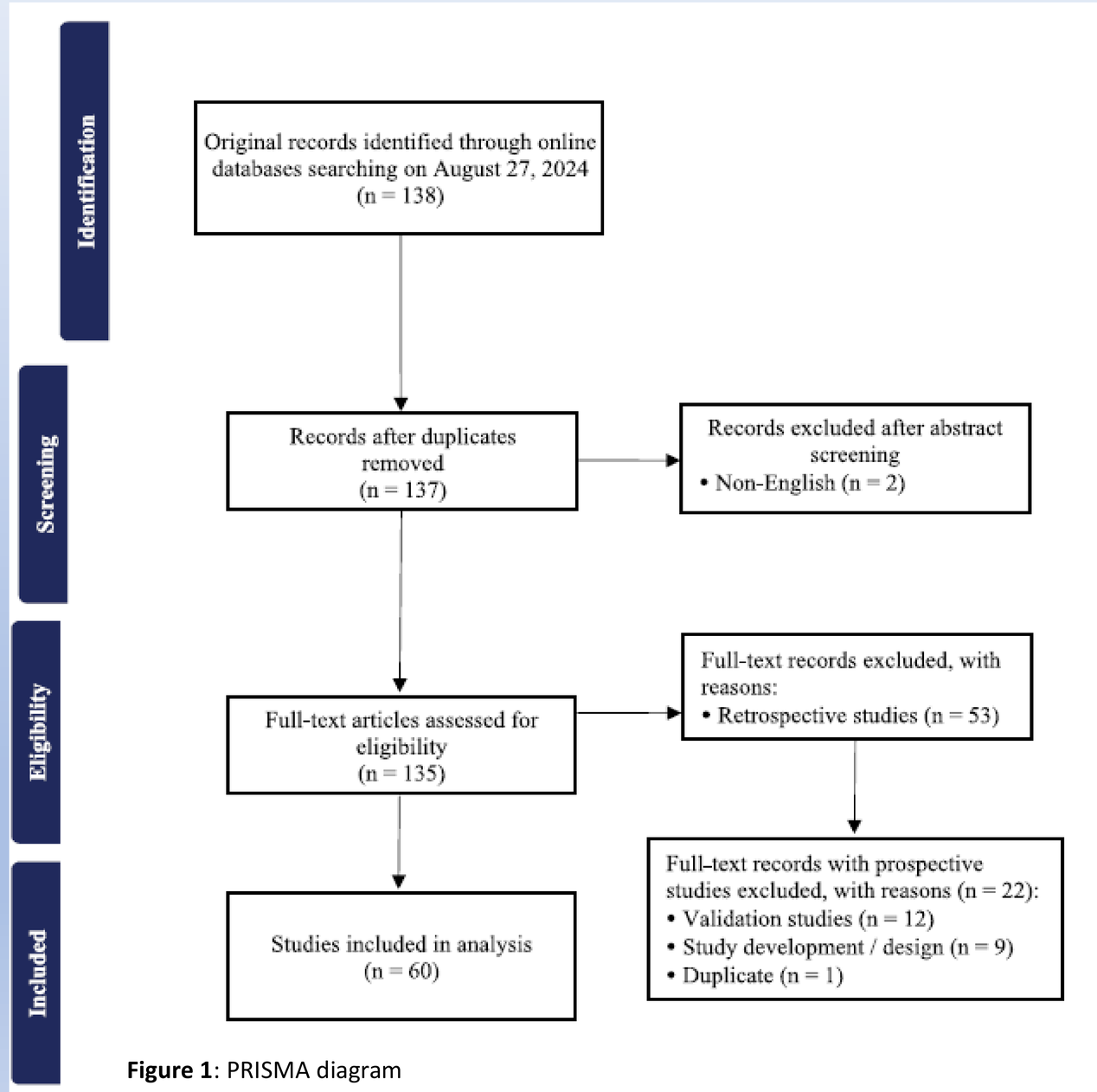

Figure 1: PRISMA diagram

Results

- Included studies: 60 articles (Figure 1)
- Study population: wide spectrum various malignant conditions were regarded as 'advanced cancer' (Table 1)
- HR-QoL instrument used:
  - **EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL** in **55 (91%)** studies
  - **FACIT-Pal-14** in **4 (7%)** studies
  - **Both** instruments in **1 (2%)** study
  - **46 (76%) studies** combined the EORTC and/or FACIT questionnaire with other questionnaires
- Adherence: completion rates ranged from **2–100%** (mean = 70%) in studies with repeated assessments

Number of studies (*n* = 60)	Number of studies (%)
Advanced cancer definitions	
Advanced	19 (32%)
Metastatic	19 (32%)
Incurable/terminal/short life expectancy/ end-stage cancer	10 (17%)
Stage III and IV	5 (8%)
Patients with cancer in palliative care	2 (2.5%)
Malignant inoperable obstruction	2 (2.5%)
Recurrence	1 (2%)
Progressive glioblastoma	1 (2%)
Oncological or haem-oncological malignancy requiring haematopoietic stem cell transplantation	1 (2%)

Table 1: Terminology used in the analysed papers to identify 'advanced cancer'

Conclusions

Broad application:
Both **EORTC QLQ-C15-PAL** and **FACIT-Pal-14** tools are widely used in prospective studies on advanced cancer.

Versatile use:
Both tools show **broad applicability** across settings, designs, and tumour types.

Selection guidance:
Tool selection should align with **study goals, patient group, treatment context, and available resources**.

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Supplementary information

References

1 European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Questionnaire Core 15 Palliative Care https://qol.eortc.org/questionnaire/qlq-c15-pal/
2 The Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Palliative https://www.facit.org/measures/facit-pal-14
3 PRISMA 2020 statement https://www.prisma-statement.org/prisma-2020