

SOCIAL SUPPORT, SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF CANCER PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

To check the association of social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction among cancer patients.

STUDY DESIGN

Correlational study.

PLACE AND DURATION OF THE STUDY

The study was completed in three months from 2nd February 2018 to 30th April 2018. The sample was taken from Nishtar Hospital, Multan (MINAR Multan).

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Purposive sampling was used to collect 100 cancer patients. Interpersonal Support Evaluation List 12, Spirituality Index of well-being and Satisfaction with Life scale were used to measure the degree of social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction in cancer patients.

RESULTS

The results indicated significant positive correlation between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction. There is also found a correlation in social support and life satisfaction. However, results also indicated that males have more social support as compare with females.

CONCLUSION

There is found association of social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction in cancer patients.

KEY WORDS

Social support, Spirituality index of well-being, Life satisfaction, Gender differences

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a term which is used for a large group of diseases characterized by the growth of abnormal cells beyond their usual boundaries that can then invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs. According to WHO (World Health Organization) cancer is the second most leading cause of death in all over the world and death rate was 8.8 million in 2015. It has been also predicted that by the end of 2030, that there will be 21.7 million new cases of cancer and 13 million sufferers of cancer will die owing to the growth and aging of the population.¹

The most common types of cancer in males are prostate, colorectal, Lung, liver and stomach cancer while in females the most common types are colorectal, breast, cervix, lung and stomach cancer. Cancer has numerous effects on a life of person who is suffering from it. It affects the physical health of the patient, mental and emotional health, daily life, work and relationships of the patient.² Cancer does also have numerous effects on the patient's family as well. Fear to loss the patient can lead the family members toward stress and emotional constraints. But for family members it is more important, to forget about all the pain and provide support to the patient. Social support plays a important role in relieving stress, works as emotional back up and support system.³ If a patient is clear about his purpose of life and meaning of life either it has important role on life satisfaction of cancer patients or not. The present study is to evaluate the role of social support and spiritual well-being on life satisfaction of cancer patients.

Social support is considered to receive help and support from the people around the person like family, friends, coworkers, pets, ties and significant other people important in person's life. Social support can be considered as help provided by other people, help in tackle the problems or as an exchange of resources. The key element of the social support is communication. Social support is also related to altruism, a sense of responsibility and the understanding of reciprocity.⁴ Social support has many forms like Instrumental (e.g., to help others in solving problems), tangible (e.g., share your things or goods or donate it to others), informational social support (e.g., to give the best advice or suggestion), and emotional (e.g., give hope or consolation), among others.⁵

Individuals with lower levels of social support have more heart problem, more inflammation, decreased functioning of immune system and more complications.⁶

Spiritual well being is the ability of the person to find meaning in life and having purpose in life. The way to find meaning and purpose in life is achieved by having connection with self and other sort of things and activities like art ,nature, literature and power grater than onself. It is a way to discover yourself. Spiritual well being is an essential part of emotional, physical, and



physical health. Ellison (1983) suggested that spiritual well-being is an underlying state of spiritual health and it is expressed in the same way like color complexion of a person and rate of your pulse describe good physical health.⁷ According to Fehring and Miller (1997) spiritual well-being is an indication of individuals' quality of life in the spiritual dimension.⁸ Studies reveal that spiritual beliefs in people increases their immunity against different diseases and is also helpful in decreasing physical and mental health problems like pain, depression and anxiety etc. Spiritual well-being is also an effective way of fast and easy recovery from diseases.⁹

Life satisfaction is considered a positive evaluation of the conditions of your life, and the results of the conditions of your life are balance, it measures up favorably against your standards or expectations.). Diener and Smith (1999) described the Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole.¹⁰ It is considered the evaluation of your whole life, it is not limited to the emotion or pleasure which is felt at the time. A person has more life satisfaction when his/ her desires and achievements are compatible with each other. Beutell (2006) states that life satisfaction is linked with good physical and mental health, longevity, and other positive aspects of life and nature.¹¹

Previous studies indicated a reported correlation between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction.¹² There is wide gap in existing literature that there is no such study conducted in local culture to check the role of social support and spiritual well-being on life satisfaction of cancer patients. So the main objectives of the study is to know the relationship of social support and spiritual well-being with life satisfaction in cancer patients, gender difference in the variables among cancer patients and age difference in spiritual wellbeing and life satisfaction.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Participants

The correlational study was conducted using Purposive sampling. Sample of 100 patients was collected from two hospitals of Multan which included Nishtar Hospital (MINAR MULTAN) and Fatima Hospital (PVT). Data of study was completed in three months from 2nd February 2018 to 30th April 2018. The age range of the patients was between 15 to 46 years; both men and women were included.

Instruments

Interpersonal Support Evaluation List 12

Social Support was measured using Interpersonal support evaluation List 12. It was developed by Cohen & Mermelstein in 1985.¹³ This scale measures the social support available. This is a 4 point Likert scale ranging from definitely false = 0 to definitely true=3. Items no 1,2, 7,8,11,12 are reversed scored. Total score is obtained by summing up all the items ranging from (0-36). The scale measures three dimensions of social support includes the appraisal support, belonging support and tangible support. Each sub item consists of four items.

Spirituality Index of well being

Spiritual well-being was checked with the scale developed by Daaleman & Frey in 2004.¹⁴ This scale checks how they see their spiritual quality of life. The scale has 12 items, each statement has five responses strongly agree to strongly disagree (1 to 5). This instrument has two subscales. One subscale is self-efficacy subscale

and the 2nd subscale is life schema subscale.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Life satisfaction was checked with this 5 item scale. The satisfaction with life was developed by Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S (1985).¹⁵ This is a 7 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The total score is obtained by summing up the total items. The maximum score of 35 can be obtained. From the 7 points, three points are related to the disagreement, other three points are related to agreement while one point is related to neutral response when the patient's response is neither agree or disagree.

Procedure

Ethical approval was sought and after wards data were collected from 100 patients of cancer from Nishtar and Fatima Hospital (PVT) of Multan, Pakistan. Questionnaires were distributed to the patients admitted in the hospital for treatment. Purpose of study was explained to them and they were told that their participation is entirely voluntarily. They were ensured of the confidentiality of their data. After collecting data, we acknowledged them for their support. Analysis of the data was done using version 21.00 of SPSS. The results were analyzed by using correlation and ANOVA.

RESULTS

Sample has 65 female and 35 male patients of cancer. 32% patients were between 15-30 years of age, 49% patients were in the age range of 31-45 years while 19% patients were 46 years and above. There were 51% married and 49 % unmarried patients. The life satisfaction scale revealed 23 percent patients were dissatisfied from their lives, 8 percent people were extremely dissatisfied from their lives, 7 percent were satisfied with their lives while 56 percent people were slightly satisfied with their lives.

Table 1 displayed the correlation among social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction among cancer patient. There was a positive correlation of spiritual well-being with social support and as well as with life satisfaction. A significant but weak positive correlation had been found between social support and spiritual well-being while significant moderate positive correlation had been found between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction.

Male patients of cancer had more social support as compared with females while gender difference were insignificant on satisfaction with life and spiritual well being (see table 2 for details).

The ANOVA yielded a significant age difference in Spiritual well-being, $F(2, 97) = 4.320, p = .001$ and Life satisfaction, $F(2, 97) = 7.429, p = 0.00$ (see table 4 for details). Mean differences in spiritual well-being and Life satisfaction scores among all three groups of age showed that spiritual well being increased with age while satisfaction with life had a fluctuating relation with age. Results showed the age group between 15-30 years had a mean score of 28.09, the patients between the age of 31-45 years had the mean score of 17.75 while the age group of 46 years and above had a mean of 23.11 (see table 3).

Table 1
Correlation among social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction.

Variables	SS	SW	LS
SS	1	0.230*	0.143
SW		1	0.404**
LS			1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2
Gender Differences in life satisfaction, social support and spiritual wellbeing (n=100)

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Life Satisfaction	Male	35	17.7429	6.19460	-.489	.626
	Female	65	18.3231	5.35347		
Social Support	Male	35	32.7429	3.98041	2.446	.016
	Female	65	30.7231	3.91515		
Spiritual-Well Being	Male	35	39.1143	9.40829	.930	.355
	Female	65	37.7077	5.71107		

Note. *p < .05

Table 3
Differences in life satisfaction and spiritual well-being in different age groups

Variables	Age	N	Mean
Spiritual Well Being	15-30	32	28.47
	31-45	49	37.67
	46 plus	19	43.42
Life Satisfaction	15-30	32	28.09
	31-45	49	17.75
	46 plus	19	23.10

Table 4
ANOVA on Spiritual well-being and life satisfaction with reference to different age groups

Variables		SS	df	MS	F	p
Spiritual Well Being	Between Groups	276.624	2	138.312	4.320	.001
	Within Groups	3105.376	97	32.014		
Life Satisfaction	Between Groups	324.991	2	162.496	7.429	.000
	Within Groups	2121.569	97	21.872		

DISCUSSION

The results depicted a significant correlation among social support, spiritual wellbeing and satisfaction with life. This finding has also been supported by previous research.¹⁶ In general, spiritual prosperity is a special power, which organizes the physical, social and mental dimensions, and is basic for human being's flexibility. At the point when the human spirituality is endangered, an individual may encounter profound spiritual disorders, for example, the sentiments of loneliness, dejection, loss of importance in life.¹⁷

Religious and spiritual assets of people are related to the level of life satisfaction, better flexibility and decline in torment and uneasiness. Consequently, the supports got from spiritual or religious assets and being associated with a higher wellspring of intensity are helpful and can enhance the personal satisfaction.¹⁸ In another study on patients with breast cancer in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. The result showed that there was strong relationship between social support and psychosocial adjustment. The results showed that patients of

cancer need social support for better adjustment.¹⁹ In a study (Jafar, 2010) on patients with cancer, a noteworthy association was found between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction.²⁰

The study checked gender differences in social support, spiritual well-being and life satisfaction in cancer patients. A significant gender difference appeared that male had more social support as compared with females. These results are inconsistent with the findings of a study conducted to check gender differences in social support, mental health and self-salience at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The inconsistency might be due to the cultural variation as our cultural is male dominating where male are considered powerful hence they could receive more social support. In another study conducted in Canada on patients with heart failure, Berard stated that females reported lower level of social support which is in line with this study.²¹

This study revealed no gender difference in life satisfaction. These results are consistent with a study done with lung cancer patients.²²



No significant gender differences could be established in social support networks and life satisfaction. But, significant gender differences revealed that females preferred spiritual practices and religious coping although in this study spiritual wellbeing was showing insignificant gender differences. Gender differences were found insignificant on the level of spiritual wellbeing according to a study which was assessing relationship between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction and death anxiety amongst older adults suffering from cancer.²³ This finding is consistent with the gender difference of spiritual wellbeing of this study.

CONCLUSION

There was a positive correlation of spiritual well-being with social support and as well as with life satisfaction. A significant but weak positive correlation had been found between social support and spiritual well-being while significant moderate positive correlation had been found between spiritual well-being and life satisfaction. male patients of cancer received more social support than female patients.

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