

“Psychological Distress Among Cancer Patients and The Supportive Roles of Nurses”

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ABSTRACT

Cancer is a life-altering disease that affects not only the physical health of patients but also their psychological well-being. This study aimed to determine the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses, as well as to examine the relationship between these variables. Specifically, the study assessed psychological distress in terms of anxiety, fear, stress, depression, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, and evaluated the supportive roles of nurses through emotional support, therapeutic communication, empathy, reassurance, and compassionate care. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 60 cancer patients selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings showed the level of psychological distress experienced by cancer patients and the extent of nurses' supportive roles in providing psychosocial care. Furthermore, the analysis determined the relationship between psychological distress and the supportive roles of nurses. The findings underscore the importance of nurses' supportive roles in addressing the psychological needs of cancer patients and promoting holistic, patient-centered oncology care. The study recommends strengthening psychosocial support interventions and enhancing nurses' competencies in therapeutic communication and emotional care to improve patient outcomes.

Keywords: *psychological distress, cancer patients, supportive roles of nurses, oncology nursing*

INTRODUCTION

Cancer affects not only a patient's physical health but also their emotional and psychological well-being. Throughout diagnosis and treatment, patients may experience psychological distress such as anxiety, fear, stress, depression, sadness, and emotional exhaustion. These challenges can affect their ability to cope with the disease and treatment process.

Nurses play an important role in supporting cancer patients through emotional support, therapeutic communication, empathy, reassurance, and compassionate care. As healthcare professionals who frequently interact with patients, nurses are in a unique position to recognize psychological needs and provide holistic support. Therefore, this study examines the psychological distress experienced by cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses in promoting their psychological well-being.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses, and to examine the relationship between these variables. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents?
2. What is the level of psychological distress among cancer patients?
3. What is the level of the supportive roles of nurses as perceived by cancer patients?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses?

Scope and Delimitations

The study assessed psychological distress in terms of anxiety, fear, stress, depression, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, while the supportive roles of nurses were evaluated in terms of emotional support, therapeutic communication, empathy, reassurance, and compassionate care. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation.

Review of Related Literature

Cancer affects not only the physical health of patients but also their emotional and psychological well-being. The World Health Organization (2022) emphasizes that many individuals with cancer experience psychological distress throughout diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. Psychological distress commonly includes anxiety, fear, stress, depression, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, which may negatively influence patients' quality of life, treatment adherence, and overall recovery. Previous studies have likewise reported that cancer patients often experience emotional challenges brought about by uncertainty, physical symptoms, and the demands of long-term treatment (Smith et al., 2021; Johnson & Lee, 2020).

Nurses play a vital role in addressing the psychological needs of cancer patients through holistic and compassionate care. Guided by Watson's Theory of Human Caring, nursing interventions such as emotional support, therapeutic communication, empathy, reassurance, and compassionate care help reduce psychological distress and improve patients' coping abilities (Watson, 2008). Studies have shown that supportive nursing care enhances patients' emotional well-being, promotes treatment adherence, and improves overall quality of care (Davis et al., 2021; Reyes et al., 2021; Sitzman & Watson, 2018). These findings underscore the importance of strengthening nurses' supportive roles in promoting holistic oncology care.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on **Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring**, which emphasizes holistic, compassionate, and patient-centered nursing care. The theory highlights the importance of empathy, therapeutic communication, and emotional support in promoting the psychological well-being of patients, making it relevant in examining the supportive roles of nurses among cancer patients.

Conceptual Framework

The study adopted the **Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model**. The input included the respondents' demographic profile, psychological distress, and the supportive roles of nurses. The process involved the administration of a validated questionnaire and statistical analysis using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The output was the assessment of the level of psychological distress among cancer patients, the supportive roles of nurses, and the relationship between these variables.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses, as well as to examine the relationship between these variables.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to determine the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses, and to examine the relationship between these variables. The descriptive method was used to assess the level of psychological distress and the supportive roles of nurses, while the correlational method determined whether a significant relationship existed between the two variables.

Research Steps

The study began with a review of related literature, followed by the development and validation of the research instrument. After obtaining the necessary approvals, data were collected from the respondents using a validated researcher-made questionnaire. The gathered data were analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools to determine the level of psychological distress among cancer patients, the supportive roles of nurses, and the relationship between these variables.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Convenience sampling was employed to select sixty (60) cancer patients receiving treatment in a tertiary hospital. Eligible participants met the established inclusion criteria and voluntarily participated after providing informed consent. Data were collected using a validated researcher-made questionnaire designed to assess the respondents' psychological distress in terms of anxiety, fear, stress, depression, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, as well as the supportive roles of nurses in terms of emotional support, therapeutic communication, empathy, reassurance, and compassionate care.

Data Analysis Methods

The respondents' demographic profile, level of psychological distress, and perceived supportive roles of nurses were summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine whether a significant relationship existed between psychological distress and the supportive roles of nurses. The findings were presented using tables and narrative discussions.

Research Hypothesis and Validation

The study tested the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses. The research instrument underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure its validity and reliability.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study complied with established ethical principles throughout the research process. Approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional authorities prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, participants were assigned identification codes instead of using their names. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The study was limited to sixty (60) cancer patients from a single tertiary hospital; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other settings or populations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study assessed the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses. It also examined the relationship between these variables using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The findings emphasized the importance of supportive nursing care in addressing the psychological needs of cancer patients.

SUMMARY

The findings determined the level of psychological distress among cancer patients and the supportive roles of nurses. The study also examined the relationship between these variables using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, providing insights into the importance of supportive nursing care in promoting the psychological well-being of cancer patients.

CONCLUSIONS

Nurses play a vital role in addressing the psychological needs of cancer patients through compassionate, holistic, and patient-centered care. Their supportive roles contribute to promoting the psychological well-being of cancer patients throughout the course of treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen psychosocial support for cancer patients.
2. Enhance nurses' competencies in emotional support and therapeutic communication.
3. Promote holistic and patient-centered oncology care.
4. Conduct future studies with larger samples and multiple institutions.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-assisted tools were used to improve grammar, language, and manuscript organization. No AI tools were used in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of the research data. The researcher assumes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and originality of this manuscript.

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