Annotated Bibliographies

Psychological and Supportive Care Needs of Patients with Breast Cancer

Key Words: depression and breast cancer

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**PubMed**

Ruland, C.M., Andersen, T., Jeneson, A., Moore, S., Grimsbo, G.H., Borosund, E., Ellison, M. (2012). Effects of an Internet Support System to Assist cancer Patients in Reducing Symptom Distress: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Cancer Nursing,* 00(0), 1-12.

The researchers’ objective was to evaluate the effect of WebChoice (an interactive health communication application) in a 2-group prospective, repeated-measures RCT. A specific aim was to examine the effects of WebChoice on symptom distress (primary outcome), and depression, self-efficacy, health-related quality of life (HRQoL), and social support (secondary outcomes) in breast and prostate cancer patients during a 1-year study period. This RCT is one of the first studies done to evaluate the effects of an interactive health communication application (IHCA) to support cancer patients in managing their illness and symptoms. Results indicate that participants in the experimental group showed significant decrease in symptom distress over time than those in the control group and no significant group differences were evident in regards to depression, self-efficacy, HRQoL and social support. Further analysis of the results showed significant with-in group improvements in depression in the experimental group and a with-in group decline of self-efficacy and HRQoL over time in the control group. The research team pointed out weaknesses related to the small sample size and certain heterogeneous factors within the sample that may have influenced study results and the lack of statistically significant group differences on secondary outcome variables. Implications for future research suggest the use of a larger sample size to allow for monitoring and controlling for possible confounders and variations in the data. This research helped identify the benefits of an IHCA in providing patient centered support to educate, equip and empower patients to better manage their illness.

**PubMed**

Schmid-Buchi, S., Halfens, R.J.G., Muller, M., Dassen, T., van den Borne, B. (2012). Factors associated with supportive care needs of patients under treatment for breast cancer. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*. 1-8.

This article is a non-experimental study aimed at gaining insight into supportive care needs of patients under treatment for breast cancer; identifying the impact of cancer treatment-related symptoms, and determining factors associated with supportive care needs. A two-site cross-sectional survey was conducted with women newly diagnosed with breast cancer undergoing chemotherapy, radiation or surgical treatment. No intervention was introduced in this study, but multiple standardized instruments were used to assess supportive care needs, cancer and cancer treatment-related symptoms, hospital anxiety and depression, distress, and interpersonal relationship. Results indicated that breast cancer patients under treatment, demonstrated supportive care needs mostly related to physical daily living, health care system and information, and psychological issues. The researchers mentioned that the results of this study lacked generalizability other breast cancer populations due to the selected sample, and that bias might have occurred during the recruitment process due. Therefore, decreasing the validity of the results. However, the study provides insight into the needs of breast cancer patients under treatment, and their need for support, and also provides a knowledgebase for specific assessment, screening, targeted symptom management, counseling and education in clinical practice. Further research is needed to determine which psychosocial variables are effective in promoting greater well-being and better adjustment to breast cancer and treatment. The findings of this study concluded that increased awareness of systematic and breast cancer-specific symptoms and symptom management may improve patients’ well being and reduce the risk of persistent treatment-related symptoms and a delayed recovery process.

**PubMed**

Lengacher, C.A., Johnson-Mallard, V., Barta, M., Fitgerald, S., Moscoso, M.S., Post-White, J., et al. (2011). Feasibility of a Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program for Early-Stage Breast Cancer Surviviors. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*. 29(2) 107-117.

The authors used a single-group, quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design to assess the feasibility of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program for early-stage breast cancer survivors. A specific aim was to assess whether MBSR has a positive effect on breast cancer survivors’ psychological status, psychosocial characteristics, symptoms, and quality of life during the critical transition period from completion of treatment to survivorship. The authors note that women with breast cancer are at high risk for psychological distress during the transitional period when close medical and nursing treatment and support end and the resumption of normal daily activities and life functions. Results of this demonstrated feasibility of MBSR having a positive effect psychological status, psychosocial characteristics, symptoms, and quality of life of early-stage breast cancer survivors post treatment, as evidenced by significant decreases in scores from pretest to posttest assessment. The limitations of this study included a small sample size, lack of a control group, lack of a follow-up assessment and the lack of generalizability to other breast cancer populations on chemotherapy and of a different ethnicity. Further research is need with other populations to determine generalizability. The implications of this study for nursing practice suggests that implementation of MBSR may help decrease patient symptoms following cancer treatment while improving psychological status and quality of life.