

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Effectiveness of Counseling on Depression among Cancer Patients
Admitted in Pravara Rural Hospital, Loni (Bk)**

Vimala G.

College of Nursing, Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences Deemed University, Loni-413736,
(Maharashtra), India

Abstract:

Background: The prevalence of major depression in cancer patients is increasing with higher levels of physical disability advanced illness and pain. *Aims and objectives:* A study was planned to assess the level of depression among the cancer patients, to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling on depression among cancer patients and to compare the level of depression with their selected socio demographic variables. *Material and Methods:* Thirty cancer patients in the age group of 35 – 65 years were studied. They were assessed for the level of depression on first day of admission followed by the counseling for five days with 25 – 30 minutes each. The post test were carried out on sixth day by using the Zung Self Rating Depression Scale. *Results:* Statistically significant decrease in depression level was found. There was significant association was found with age and type of cancer and the level of depression. *Conclusion:* Our results indicate that the effects of counseling decrease the depression level. It is essential to raise the awareness and seek attitudinal and behavioral changes among the health care professionals to tackle the psychological problems.

Key words: counseling, depression, cancer patients.

Introduction:

Cancer affects everyone and represents a tremendous burden on patients, families and societies. Its impact is likely to increase substantially, causing a lot of pain and suffering. Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, from total of 58 million deaths worldwide in 2005, cancer accounts for 7.6 million (13%) of all deaths. More than 70% all cancer deaths occur in developing and under developed countries. Deaths from cancer in the world are projected to continue rising, with an estimated 9 million people dying from cancer in 2015 and 11.4 million dying in 2030 [1].

It is estimated that 1 million new cancer cases per annum will be recorded and at any given time there will be 3 million cancer patients in India. India has the highest number of the oral and throat cancer cases in the world [2]. The principal means for treating cancer - surgery, Chemotherapy, radiation and hormonal therapy - are frequently very effective in stopping tumor progression, reducing cancer attributable pain and discomfort, extending life and duration of the disease [3].

The prevalence of major depression in cancer patients is estimated to be 20% to 25%, increasing with higher levels of physical disability, advanced illness and pain. Approximately 25% present reveal depression at initial diag-

nosis and 75% develop depression subsequently. One in four persons living with cancer has depression [4]. Health professionals can help to reduce the distress substantially to the patient and family that follows the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Evidence suggests that psychosocial therapies improve emotional adjustment and reduce both treatment and disease related distress in cancer patients [5]. A study was therefore conducted to assess the level of depression among the cancer patients, to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling on depression among cancer patients and to compare the level of depression with their selected socio demographic variables.

Material and Methods:

The Quasi - experimental study, pre test post test design without control group approach were used. The present study was conducted in 30 cancer patients in the age group of 35 – 65 years at Pravara Rural Hospital, Loni. Approval by ethical committee of Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences was obtained. The study protocol was explained to the subjects and written consent was obtained. The subjects were selected by purposive sampling method, based on inclusion criteria's. Zung Self Rating Depression Scale was used in the interview schedule to collect data [6]. Pre test: was conducted on first day of admission using with (ZSRDS) rating scale. Assessment of the level of depression (pretest) on first day of admission was followed by counseling provided for five days, 25 – 30 minutes on each day; The post test was carried out on the sixth day with the same tool. The collected data was organized and analyzed based on the objectives by using descriptive and

inferential statistics.

Results:

Findings related to socio demographic variables: Highest percentage (40%) of patients were >56 years of age, Majority 70% were females, 53% had primary school education, 60% belonged to nuclear family, 50% were house wives, 47% had monthly income <500 Rs, almost all (97%) were married and most (87%) were Hindus.

Findings related to clinical characteristics: The common cancers of samples were Lymphoma (30%), Head and Neck cancer (20%) and cancer of cervix (13%). 44% had chemotherapy, 30% received radiation therapy and 23% had combination of treatment. Only 10% had family history of cancer and 38% of patients had habit of betel/pan chewing. The major problems faced by the cancer patients were, problems with activities of daily living (ADL) (63%), finance (40%), health problems (27%), social adjustment, and family problem (17%). (Figure-1)

Effectiveness of counseling on depression:

There was a significant reduction in level of depression score after the counseling therapy ($t=7.77, p<0.05$) (Table-1) However, the counseling therapy was more effective in various aspects. (Table-II) The level of depression had significant association with the age and type of cancer ($p<0.05$).

Fig. 1 - Common Problems of Cancer Patients

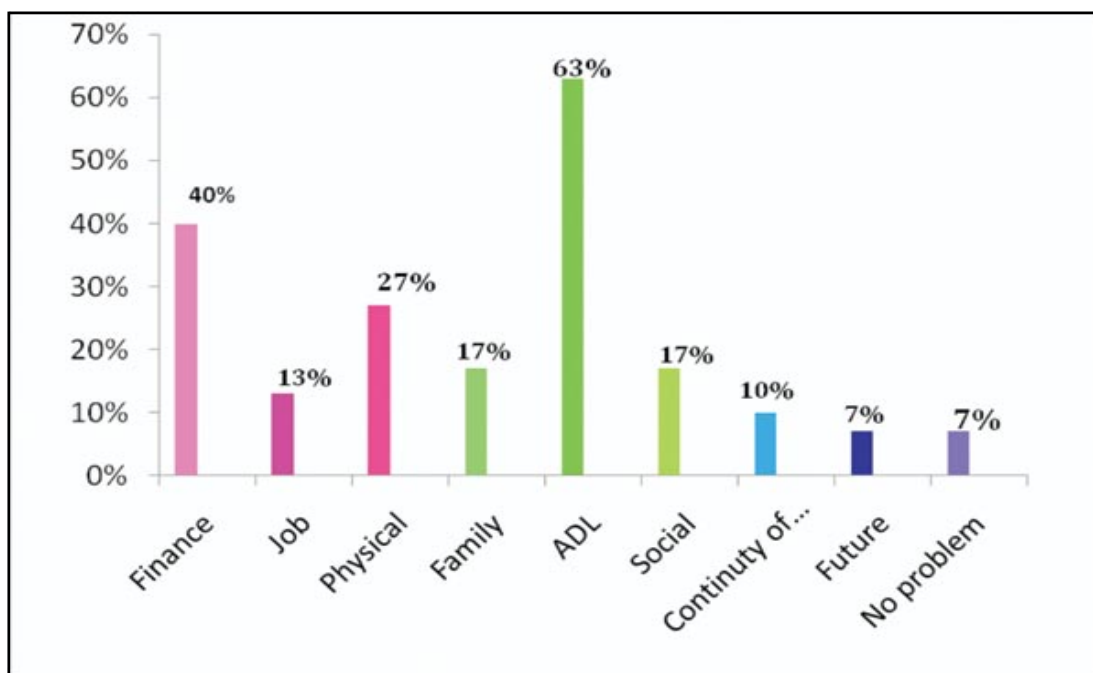


Table 1- Effectiveness of counseling: statistical analysis

Before counseling	After counseling	't' value
Mean ± SD	Mean ± SD	
49.8 ± 4.69	45.5 ± 3.8	7.77* (p<0.05)

* Significant

Table 2 – Area of Disturbances wise comparison of Effectiveness of counseling

Areas of Disturbances	Pretest	Post test	Effectiveness
Crying spells/feel like it	59.1	51.6	7.5
Trouble in sleeping at night	70.8	60	10.8
Heart beat (faster than usual)	66.6	60.8	5.8
Difficulty to do things (ADL)	65.8	54.1	11.6
Not feeling Hopeful about future	49.1	58.1	9
Irritable	63.3	56.6	6.6
Problem in Decision making	63.3	70.8	7.5
Restless	73	65	8
Unclear mind	63.3	52.5	10.8
Difficulty to enjoy the things	71.1	63.5	8

Discussion:

The cancer patients have variety of health problems like physical, emotional, psychological, social, financial and problems in ADL etc. Barg F. *et.al* have found changes in psychological health status among cancer patients. He has recognized that many cancer patients suffer appreciable rates of psychiatric morbidity; importantly, about two-thirds of cancer patients have reported various unmet psychosocial needs [7].

In our study, the counseling therapy has showed significant reduction in level of depression and there were significant differences in various aspects of problems. Rehse B, has studied effects of counseling in cancer patients and concluded that there has been increase in coping and reduction the depression and significant improvement in the QOL [8].

Conclusion:

From the present study, the results revealed that the cancer patients are invariably exposed to psychosocial stress due to the disease and the treatment strategy. The practice of counseling would benefit the cancer patients as it would prepare them in overcoming depression and psycho social problems. The health care professionals should know the skills in counseling and must use these techniques correctly so as to bring win – win situation. Consideration may be given to emotional distress as the sixth vital sign to be checked routinely along with

Temperature, Pulse, Respiration (TPR), Blood pressure and pain.

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**Author for Correspondence: Mrs. G. Vimala, College of Nursing, Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences Deemed University, Loni-413736, (Maharashtra), India.
Mob: 9960783747 Email: Sivavimal.guru@gmail.com*