

Fluctuate Accommodation in Social Interaction by Cancer Patients; a Qualitative Study in Ahwaz

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Introduction

Cancer is a global risk for human in all contemporary societies and have multiple faces. The cancer diagnosis has variant effects on the patient and relatives. These include emotional, social, relational, economic, and mental effects. Cancer affects the patient and also, the patient's partner, children, extended family, friends, and entire network of support. But, patients and relatives response and adjust themselves by the new situation and its challenges. They attempt for managing the condition and come over to challenges. In this process, different actions and interactions occur. Family and social relations are sources of support for patients and can be challenging simultaneously. The purpose of this study was to explore the interpretations of cancer patients about the relations in family and community after diagnosis.

Material & Methods

This is an interpretative-qualitative research and was conducted by the Basic Qualitative Research Method (Merriam, 2009). We used this method because we was interested in understanding how patients interpret their experiences and what meaning they attribute to their experiences about cancer. Our research participants was 17 cancer patients who had spent treatment time in hospitals of Ahwaz city. The data gathered through semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Accordingly, purposeful sampling method was used. Data saturation criteria used for deciding sample size, and we continued the process of sampling until we founded the answers became repetitive and no new concept could be created. Before starting the interviews, we collected participant patients consent. The participants became familiar with the research procedure through the explanation of the research purposes and methods. Theoretical coding (Strause & Corbin, 1998) was utilized for data analysis. During the open coding, interview texts were encoded line by line. While in axial coding, they were put together and transformed into categories. We tried to achieve a level of credibility in research findings by continuous comparison of participants' statements and paying attention to their feedbacks to the analysis.

Discussion of Results & Conclusions

After each interview, we transcribed the interview. The coding process started after 2nd interviews and continued to end of the data collection. Transcripts coded in initial phase line by line and the meaningful concepts were constructed. Each text was coded by one of the authors and was checked by the other one. In first phase of coding, 50 concepts and 6 categories were emerged. After merging the main categories, Fluctuate accommodation was emerged as the main phenomenon (core category) in the findings. The findings showed that participants experienced ups and downs in regulating their relationships, and their interactions underwent many changes after diagnosis. The specific conditions of the diagnosis, along with the difficulty of regulating their relationships, make their life different. Patients and their family encounter many fluctuations and challenges that encourage them to have strategies to cope with diagnosis. Usually, the onset of a disease is associated with inappropriate physical conditions and unknown symptoms, which is a prelude to a special experience. Therefore, a new form of relationship is formed between the patient and his relatives. In this new situation, family members become closer than ever and try to return the emotional energy to patient. So, they adopt themselves to the new

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situation in various ways. One of their most important concerns in such situation is how to control the situation, the unknown status of the new situation, and the fear of personal and social changes. The specificity of experiencing cancer on the one hand, and the lack of familiarity of the people on the other hand, increase the need for educating people. As cancer can affect every individual from any family and it is not particularly specific, how to deal with the disease during the post-exposure period is very important. Research findings suggest that some kind of cultural review is needed while facing cancer. Modifying negative behavior and ill-considered misconceptions about the disease are also needed to better respond to the illness and reduce stress and mental harm to patients.

Keywords: Cancer, Accommodation, Adjustment, Social Support, Patients.

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