

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted for the purposes of identifying the needs of postmastectomy patients at 3rd day and 7th day after surgery, and investigating the relationships between needs and age, and needs and family relationships of postmastectomy patients. A descriptive-correlational design was used in this study. 48 subjects were selected by purposive sampling techniques in the First Teaching Hospital of West China University of Medical Sciences in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. The study was conducted from December, 1995 to February, 1996. The instrument used in this study were the interviewing forms which consisted of three parts: the Demographic Data form, the Needs Assessment Scale (NAS), and the Family Relationship Assessment Scale (FRAS).

The findings of this study were concluded in this chapter. The implications of the findings to nursing practice, nursing education and nursing management, as well as the recommendations of further nursing researches are also presented in this chapter.

Findings and conclusion

The findings of this study contributed to the conclusions of:

1. The total needs of postmastectomy patients at 3rd day and 7th day were very important. The highest rank needs at 3rd day and 7th day after surgery were self-actualization needs.

2. The five most important needs at 3rd day after surgery included: freeing of wound infection or necrosis, keeping drainage tube patency, receiving love and care from family and friends, receiving love and care from nurses and surgeons, and feeling hope.

The five most important needs at 7th day after surgery included: freeing of wound infection or necrosis, experiencing more laughter, freeing of stiffness of shoulder joint, doing regular arm exercises, and receiving love and care from family and friends.

Physical needs were very important at 3rd day and moderately important at 7th day after surgery. Safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs were both very important at 3rd day and 7th day after surgery.

Physical needs focused on nutrition, arm exercises, sanitation, sleep and rest, and environment. Safety needs focused on freeing of wound infection and stiffness of

shoulder joint, correct treatment, safe medical equipment, keeping patency of drainage tube, and getting instructions on prevention of arm swelling and arm exercises. Belonging and love needs focused on love and care, communication, staying with family, receiving touching and comfort, and being visited by other patients received the same surgery. Esteem needs focused on self-confidence, self-respect, being respected, valued and treated equally. Self-actualization needs focused on experiencing laughter, feeling hope, maintaining better standards of living, meeting goals, and offering help to others.

3. Age had a negative correlation with total needs of postmastectomy patients. Older patients had less needs than younger patients. The hypothesis 1 was supported by the finding.

4. Family relationship had a negative correlation with physical needs of postmastectomy patients. Patients with better family relationship had less physical needs than those patients with worse family relationship. The hypothesis 2 was supported by this finding. Family relationship had no correlation with safety needs, belonging and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. The hypothesis 2 was rejected by these findings.

Implications of findings

1. Implications for nursing practice: The results of this study regarding to needs of postmastectomy patients can be used as a guidance for nurses to assess patients' needs in a holistic manner, and to make holistic nursing care plans to provide both physical and psychosocial support to meet their needs.

Basing on the five most important needs at 3rd day and 7th day after surgery, several implications were concluded:

(1) Providing instructions on postoperative nutrition, taking aseptic wound care strictly to prevent wound infection at 3rd day and 7th day after surgery.

(2) Providing safe medical equipment for wound drainage, making sure the patency of drainage tube to prevent blood accumulation under wound.

(3) Pay more attention to emotional support through contact and communicate with patients, showing understanding and love, providing touching and comfort, talking with them and accept their feelings, respect them as a human being instead of an object, creating a pleasurable environment, and giving hope to their future life to help patients coping effectively.

(4) Strengthen patients' support system, especially family support to help patients coping more effectively.

(5) Inform the importance of early arm exercises,

instruct on correct arm exercises, and ask patients returning demonstration of arm exercises before surgery to make patients doing postoperative exercises positively and correctly. Instruct and help patients doing regular arm exercises gradually after surgery to prevent stiffness of shoulder joint.

The results regarding to the relationships between needs and age, and needs and family relationships can be used to help nurses to understand the influences of age and family relationships on patients' needs, and the importance of individualized nursing care for patients in different age groups, and enhancing patients' support system, especially family support on the fulfillment of their needs.

2. Implications for nursing education: The results of this study regarding to both physical and psychological needs and the relationships between needs and age, and needs and family relationships can help nursing educators to develop holistic nursing care teaching plan of postmastectomy patients for students. Also, this study was guided by Maslow's hierarchy of basic human needs. The easy application of Maslow's theory in identifying patients needs can help nursing educators to recognize the importance of Maslow's theory in guiding nursing practice, and pay attention to combine Maslow's theory into nursing education. 3 .

Implications for nursing research: The findings of this study

can be used as a basic data for further study of postmastectomy patients' needs, the effect of nursing interventions on fulfillment of patients' needs, the influencing factors of the needs of postmastectomy patients, and the effect of social support, especially family support on needs fulfillment of patients.

Recommendations

Basing on the results of this study, several further researches are recommended.

1. Increasing sample size, and expand the influencing factors to do the study in another hospitals in China to further identify the needs of postmastectomy patients, and the influencing factors of postmastectomy patients' needs may increase the generalizability of the findings.

2. Identification of patients' needs after discharge can provide a basis for nurses in understanding of patients' care needs out of the hospital, and making better public health care plan and interventions to help them.

3. Exploring the effects of nursing interventions on fulfillment of postmastectomy patients' needs can help nurses to develop alternative nursing strategies to meet their needs.

4. Exploring the effects of social support, especially family support on fulfillment of postmastectomy patients' needs is essential for nurses to understand the

importance of strengthening social support system, especially family support to meet their needs.

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