

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This descriptive study was conducted to describe quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy. The subjects were 20 Chinese mastectomy patients who met eligibility criteria at three major teaching hospitals, namely, Oncology Hospital of PUMC, the First, and Second Teaching Hospital of BMU. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, which composed of demographic data form and Quality of Life Index-Cancer Version. Data collection was carried out from December 1997 to February 1998. SPSS was used for data analysis. Descriptive analysis in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the subjects' demographic data and quality of life.

Findings and conclusion

Based on the findings from the present study, the following conclusion were drawn:

1. The quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy had not tremendously changed.

2. Within four domains, family domain was the most satisfied domain, and psychological/spiritual domain was the least satisfactory domain.

Implication of findings

Based on the results of this study, the following implications for nursing emerge.

Implications for nursing practice

Information gained from this study will be used as basic information to increase nurses' understanding of perceived quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy. Though the result of this study showed quality of life were not changed a lot during the course of radiotherapy, score of health and functioning domain and psychological/spiritual domain provide evidence that nurses should concern and provide more information regarding to treatment, its side effects, and ways to adjust to changes during the treatment. Also nurses should give emotional support to the patients and encourage family members to support them during cancer treatment in order to patients gain satisfied quality of life.

Implications for nursing education

The result of the study will provide the baseline knowledge to help educators to enhance students' understanding of quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy. In order to identify and enhance positive effect on quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy.

Implications for nursing administration

The basic information gained from this study will help nursing administrators to understand and be aware of the quality of life among mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy. They set up the program of inservice education focusing on quality of life, especially health and functioning and psychological/spiritual domain during this stressful situation.

Implications for nursing research

The information will provide basic knowledge to generate future study on seeking factors and/or ways to enhance the patients' health and functioning, psychological/spiritual domain in order to provide comprehensive holistic care to assist the patients achieve optimal quality of life during this stressful time. This

study can also prove the Quality of Life Index-Cancer Version can be used among Chinese cancer patients.

Limitations of the study

This study used purposive small sampling method, which was not randomized. The sample size was only 20. On the other hand, most of the subjects (65%) in this study receiving total reimbursement, they can not represent the majority of the Chinese population whom are poor and used to pay for all treatments by themselves. Therefore, the generalization of the study could not be possible. The data was collected in each week, the subjects may remember the items of the instrument, that may influence the result of the study.

Recommendations

Based on the limitation of this study, several recommendations for further studies including the following:

1. Replication of this study with larger sample size and using randomization to select samples from various hospitals and several geographic areas in China. And use statistic analysis to test the change of quality of life, so that the outcome of the study may more valuables for practice.

2. Determination of the changes of quality of life in different age, educational background, income.
3. Collection data before surgery, before radiotherapy, at the second week and fifth week of radiotherapy, at the end of radiotherapy, and before another course of treatment to show the overall response pattern of mastectomy patients receiving radiotherapy.