

Breast Cancer Patients Coping Styles

Akram Sajadian¹, Leila Hydari¹, Shahpar Haghghat¹, Mehdi Hoseinian S²

¹Quality of Life Research Department, Iranian Center for Breast Cancer, Iran, ²Iranian Center for Breast Cancer, Iran

Background & propose: Breast cancer is a tragic experience that accompanies stressful situations for patients. Although some studies have been conducted to explore coping styles used by patients to over come cancer, but only a few data in Iranian breast cancer coping styles was detected. We designed a qualitative study to elaborate coping styles.

Method: In this study we conducted in- depth guided interviews for 30 breast cancer participants who attended in breast cancer follow-up clinic in ICBC (Iranian Center for Breast Cancer), Tehran, Iran. The interviews were audiotape-recorded then transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was performed to elaborate outcomes.

Results: All of participants had breast surgery and also 93% had chemo and radiotherapy. The mean age of them was 50.6 (SD=+ 8.2). Twenty-two (73%) were married and time period between the diagnosis and their interviews was 1-17 years. The major themes emerged from analysis were: 1) God as the powerful source for patients to seek for help, 2) positive thinking as an important factor to adjust and adapt themselves with cancer and 3) social and family supports as one of the main sources to reassure the patients.

Finally the three mentioned above themes were the most important coping styles used by the breast cancer patients to overcome their anxieties and emotional problems.

Conclusion: The study data show that, trust in God, positive thinking and social and family supports are the most main important coping strategies used the breast cancer patients. It seems that, health care providers must be sensitive about patients' coping styles. Also, they must promote patients to use their positive mental powers to win the battle.