B3.3: Informal Caregiver Training Prior to Hospital Discharge of Cancer Patients

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Abstract:
Introduction: Cancer symptom management is essential in home caregiving. However, many family caregivers lack confidence and are ill-prepared to assist their loved ones in managing cancer symptoms at home. This lack of confidence or self-efficacy and preparedness among informal caregivers is heightened during early days of hospital discharge because of limited discharge preparation, and that many patients return home while still convalescing from treatment effects.

Method(s): Based on Bandura’s self-efficacy framework, we hypothesized that an individualized, tailored approach to training has the potential to promote self-efficacy and preparedness among caregivers. The specific aims of this study were to examine the effects of an individualized and tailored symptom management training on self-efficacy and preparedness in symptom management and home care of informal caregivers, and on symptom distress of cancer patients. The setting was 9100 at the Duke Hospital. The sample consisted of 120 dyads equally assigned in the treatment and comparison-control groups. Caregiver and patient data were collected before and after training, and at 1, 2, and 4 weeks of hospital discharge.

Results: Analysis of caregiver data in the treatment group revealed that there was a significant improvement in self-efficacy in home care and symptom management immediately after training (t = -7.24, p<.0001) and was sustained at 1, 2, and 4 weeks of hospital discharge (t = -5.31, p<.0001; t = -4.81, p <.0001, and t = -4.45, p<.0001 respectively). This effect was not observed in the comparison-control group. Similar trend was observed in the levels of caregiving preparedness. The correlation between self-efficacy and preparedness was at 0.88. Further analysis is being conducted to look at patient data and to determine relationships between caregiver and patient variables.
**Discussion & Conclusions:** This study could have important implications for the nursing community on how to effectively prepare family cancer caregivers for home caregiving. The findings of this research have potential for practical application and development of useful strategies for nursing interventions that offer both caregiver and patient support at the key moment of hospital discharge.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.
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**Financial Disclosure:**
No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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