PIII-5: A Phenomenological Description of the Lived Experience of Creating Art for Women with Breast Cancer: Preliminary Findings

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Presentation Preference: Student poster submission

Abstract Categories:
Research Interest Groups (RIGs): Health Promotion/Self-care
Research Interest Groups (RIGs): Qualitative

Abstract:
Introduction: Conventional approaches to cancer treatment typically do not address the subjective experiences of the women with breast cancer. The aim of this study was to develop a structural description of the lived experience of women with breast cancer who create art. Specifically, to describe that experience for those women with breast cancer who create art by painting, sketching or drawing.

Method(s): The phenomenological approach was employed to describe the meaning of creating art for a group of four women with breast cancer. Phenomenology provided an avenue for direct exploration that sought to describe the phenomenon as free from unexamined presuppositions as possible. Throughout the gathering and analysis of the data, the researcher actively bracketed preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon of interest by identifying and examining past knowledge about the phenomenon. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews. A key feature of phenomenological inquiry, in the tradition of Husserl, calls for a transcendental attitude on the part of the researcher. Thus, the focus for this study was one of bracketing the natural attitude and views of the researcher through phenomenological reduction.

Results: Giorgi’s method for analyzing phenomenological data was used to elicit the description of creating art for the study participants. More than a coping strategy, the experience of creating art was an opportunity to find strength and resilience to overcome the devastating aftermath of the breast cancer experience. While building self esteem and reaffirming a sense of self for each woman, creating art became a way to leave a legacy for these women.
**Discussion & Conclusions:** An awareness of the benefits of creating art presents nurses with an opportunity to explore creative art expression with their patients. Nurses are in a unique position to facilitate the creative art process which has the potential for self-healing and self-responsibility.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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