PIII-8: Distress in Women with Ovarian Cancer

Author List:
Presenting Author: Judith Dellaripa
Additional Author: Debra Lyon

Presenting Author: Judith Dellaripa
Address: 1100 East Leigh Street
Richmond, Virginia 23298
United States
Ph: 804-683-2895
Fax:
Email: dellaripaja@vcu.edu
Institution: Virginia Commonwealth University

Additional Author: Debra Lyon
Address: 1000 E. Leigh St
Richmond, Virginia VA
United States
Ph: 8048285635
Fax:
Email: delyon@vcu.edu
Institution: VCU

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Abstract:
Introduction: The purpose of this literature synthesis was to explore the conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement of distress in ovarian cancer (OC). OC is the fifth leading cause of cancer death among women and delayed diagnosis means that it is often advanced before treatment begins. The advanced stage, along with the emotional implications of gynecological cancer, may lead to distress in affected women. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network 2008 Distress guidelines propose that “distress is a multifactorial, unpleasant emotional experience of a psychological (cognitive, behavioral, emotional), social, and/or spiritual nature that may interfere with the ability to cope effectively with cancer, its physical symptoms and its treatments." However, there have been multiple definitions and operationalizations of distress in the literature. Therefore, this synthesis was guided by the following specific aims 1) to identify and summarize how distress has been defined in women with OC; and 2) to identify future research directions regarding distress in women with OC.
Method(s): The search was conducted using electronic nursing, psychological and medical data bases including CINAHL, EBSCOT Host, MEDLINE/PUBMED, and Psychinfo. Multiple key words were used including OC, gynecological cancer, neoplasm, distress, emotional distress, psychological distress and quality of life. Review of bibliographies provided additional references. The final 127 articles were summarized in table form to facilitate comparative examination and synthesis.

Results: There is not yet a consistent language used to define distress in OC. Distress has been defined and operationalized in multiple ways and measured with a variety of instruments.

Discussion & Conclusions: A standardized definition of distress should include the complex and significant aspects noted by researchers and clinicians. Future study of distress, and particularly research to examine distress within OC, would benefit from the use of a consensus definition, and consistent use of measurement tools so that nursing research can proceed in an organized manner.

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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Submitted by:
dellaripaja@vcu.edu