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EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOEDUCATION REGARDING ANXIETY REDUCTION AMONG CAREGIVERS OF CANCER PATIENTS: A PRE-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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Abstract: AIM: The study aimed to determine the effectiveness of psychoeducation regarding anxiety reduction among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in radiation oncology wards and to associate the post-test level of anxiety with their selected demographic variables. **DESIGN AND SETTING:** Pre-experimental study, one group pretest-post-test design was used. The study was conducted in the Radiation Oncology Wards at SVIMS, Tirupati. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** 60 caregivers of cancer patients were recruited by using convenience sampling technique. A structured questionnaire for socio-demographic data was used. Anxiety was measured by the Beck Anxiety Inventory. **RESULTS:** Decrease in Beck Anxiety scores after psychoeducation was significant ($p=0.00$). Level of education, Occupation and Area of residence were associated with post-test Beck Anxiety scores at $p<0.01$ level. Family income per month and Quality of life were associated with post-test Beck Anxiety scores at $p<0.05$ level. **CONCLUSION:** Evidence from this investigation revealed the psychoeducation offered will help the caregivers to alleviate care giving burden and enhance coping abilities. Thus, the enhanced coping abilities will reduce their anxiety which helps them to improve their quality of life, which in turn helps them to provide the best possible care to the patient.

Keywords: Anxiety, Anxiety reduction, Psychoeducation, Caregivers, Cancer patients, Radiation oncology



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INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally.¹ In India, every year, new cancer patients registered is over 7 lakh and total cancer-related deaths were 5,56,400.² Cancer affects not only patients but also those who take care of them.³ In addition to physical distress, caregivers suffer from psychological distress substantially.⁴ They need to take good care of themselves to reduce their level of stress, depression and anxiety.⁵

In the area of psycho-oncology, psychoeducation has been implemented in both the caregivers and the patients aimed at achieving better preparation of these people to adverse effects of medical treatment.⁶

In this background, the present study aimed to determine the effectiveness of psychoeducation regarding anxiety reduction among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in radiation oncology wards and to associate the post-test level of anxiety with their selected demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

One group pretest-post-test design was used for the study. 60 caregivers of cancer patients were selected from Radiation Oncology wards at SVIMS, Tirupati by convenience sampling technique. Anxiety was assessed by using Beck Anxiety Inventory. Reliability was ($r=0.8729$), indicating high correlation of scores in both the tests, which was calculated by test-retest method using Spearman Brown formula. The content validity of the tool and the psychoeducation was obtained from 10 experts in the fields of Psychiatry, Oncology, Psychology and Psychiatry Nursing.

INSTRUMENT

The tool is divided into two sections. Section-I consists of socio-demographic data of caregivers and cancer patients. Caregiver variables were age, gender, religion, marital status, level of education, occupation, area of residence, living with patient, relationship with patient, family income, intake of harmful substances, past history of cancer, past history of mental illness, habit of taking medication for anxiety, quality of life and source of information. Cancer patient variables were age, gender, family income, financial support, type of cancer, duration of illness, duration of treatment and quality of care receiving. Section-II consists of Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck et. al., 1988) It consists of 21 items on 4 point rating scale. Each item has 4 alternatives: Not at all, Mildly-but it didn't bother me much, Moderately-it wasn't pleasant at times and Severely-it bothered me a lot. The maximum total score was 63. The total scores of anxiety were interpreted in to three levels: Low anxiety (0-21), Moderate anxiety (22-35) and Potentially concerning levels of anxiety(36-63).

PSYCHOEDUCATION

The Psychoeducation which was titled as “Anxiety reduction for cancer caregivers.” was prepared to reduce the anxiety of the caregivers. It was organized under 4 headings: Introduction, Knowing about caregiver’s stress/overload, burnout and anxiety, Need for help when not handling well and Taking care of one’s own self.

MAIN STUDY

Prior to the data collection, permission was obtained from the H.O.D of Radiation Oncology, SVIMS, Tirupati. A minimum of 3-4 samples per day were interviewed for a period of 3 weeks using a structured interview, followed by psychoeducation, which was given for 45 min by using slides, poster presentation and pamphlets and doubts were clarified. After 7 days of pre-test, post-test was conducted.

Results

The demographic variables related to the age of the caregivers of cancer patients, 32(53.3%) were aged 16-40 years, 24(40%) were aged 41-65years and 4(6.7%) were aged 66-90 years. Regarding gender, 26(43.3%) were males and remaining 34(56.7%) were females. With regard to religion, 52(86.7%) were Hindus, 5(8.3%) were Muslims and 3(5%) were Christians. Pertaining to marital status, 45(75%) were married, 10(16.7%) were unmarried, none(0%) were divorced and 5(8.3%) were widow/widower. In relation to level of education, 28(46.7%) were illiterates, 12(20%) studied primary education, 8(13.3%) studied secondary education, 11(18.3%) studied higher secondary education and 1(1.7%) was graduated. With regard to occupation, 7(11.7%) were unemployed, 36(60%) were coolies, 3(5%) were doing business, 4(6.7%) were private employees, none (0%) was a government employee, 10(16.75) were home makers and none was retired. When considering about residence, 44(73.3%) were residing in rural areas, 4(6.7%) were residing in urban areas and 12(20%) were residing in semi urban areas. With regard to living with patient, 42(70%) were living with the patient and remaining 18(30%) were not living with the patient. Out of 42(70%), 8(13.3%) lived for 1 month, 12(20%) lived for 2 months, 11(18.3%) lived for 3 months, 2(3.3%) lived for 4 months and 9(15%) lived for 5 months and above. Regarding relationship with the patient, 21(35%) were spouses, 24(40%) were children, 4(6.7%) were parents, 2(3.3%) were siblings and 9(15%) were others. Pertaining to the income of the family per month, 11(18.3%) were earning below Rs. 3,000/-, 35(58.3%) were earning around Rs. 3,001-10,000/-, 12(20%) were earning around Rs. 10,001-20,000/- and 2(3.3%) were earning above Rs. 20,000/-. With regard to habit of taking harmful substances, 15(25%) were habituated and 45(75%) were not habituated. Out of 15(25%), 10(16.7%) were taking betel leaves and nuts and 5(8.3%) were used to beedi/cigarette. Among 60 samples, no one had history of cancer in the past. Out of 60 samples, 2(3.3%) had history of

mental illness in the past and the remaining 58(96.7%) had no history no mental illness in the past. Considering habit of taking medication for anxiety, no one had the habit of taking medication for anxiety. Pertaining to quality of life, 41(68.3%) responded as being satisfactory, 19(31.7%) responded as unsatisfactory and none responded as being undifferentiated. Regarding source of information about anxiety reduction, out of 60 caregivers of cancer patients, none had received information about anxiety reduction.

In pre-test, out of 60 caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards, 52(86.7%) had low anxiety, 7(11.6%) had moderate anxiety and 1(1.7%) had potentially concerning level of anxiety. In post-test, out of 60 caregivers of cancer patients 58(96.7%) had low anxiety, 2(3.33%) had moderate anxiety and none (0%) had potentially concerning level of anxiety.

Frequency and percentage distribution of level of anxiety among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards in pre and post test.

n=60

VARIABLE	LOW ANXIETY		MODERATE ANXIETY		POTENTIALLY CONCERNING LEVEL OF ANXIETY	
	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)	(f)	(%)
Pre-test Anxiety scores	52	86.7	7	11.6	1	1.7
Post-test Anxiety scores	58	96.67	2	3.53	0	0

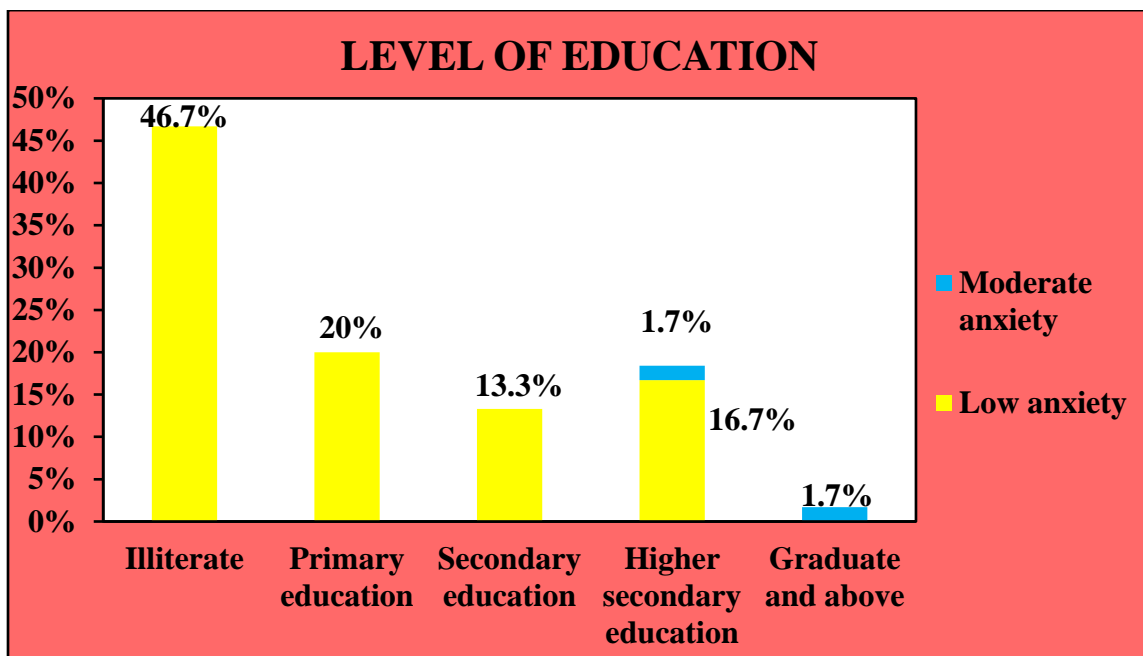
Comparison of mean and standard deviation on the level of anxiety in pre-test and post-test among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards.

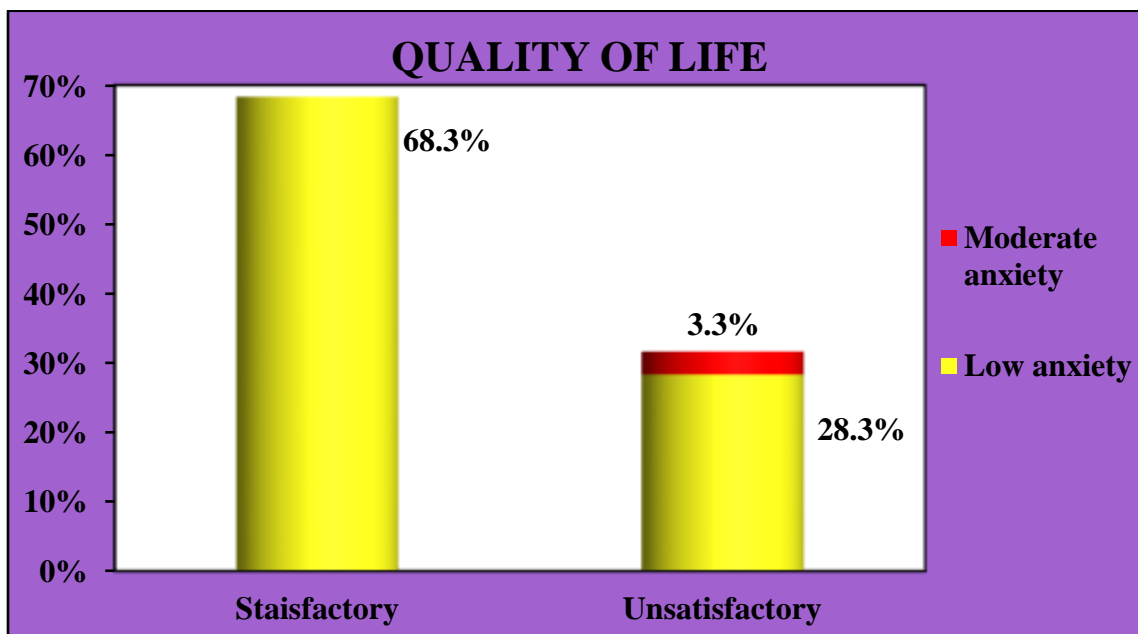
N= 60

PRE-TEST		POST-TEST		't' VALUE	'p' VALUE
MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		
7.08	8.943	2.28	5.169	6.346	0.00**

The above table shows that the pre-test Mean value was 7.08 with a Standard deviation of 8.943 and the post-test Mean value was 2.28 with a Standard Deviation of 5.169 and the calculated t-value (6.346) and p-value (0.00) were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. The above results revealed that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards after psychoeducation.

Related to level of anxiety and the demographic variables association the family income per month (0.027) and quality of life (0.035) of caregivers of cancer patients had significant association with their post-test anxiety scores at $p < 0.05$ level, level of education (0.00), occupation (0.00) and area of residence (0.00) at $p < 0.01$ level. Other demographic variables of caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards did not have any significant association with post-test anxiety scores.





DISCUSSION

The first objective of the study was to assess the level of anxiety among caregivers of cancer patients in Radiation Oncology Wards. In pre-test, the results revealed that among 60 caregivers of cancer patients in Radiation Oncology Wards 52(86.7%) had low anxiety, 7(11.6%) had moderate anxiety and 1(1.7%) had potentially concerning level of anxiety.

The second objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of psychoeducation regarding anxiety reduction among caregivers of cancer patients in Radiation Oncology Wards. In pre-test, the findings of the study revealed that among 60 caregivers of cancer patients In Radiation Oncology Wards 52(86.7%) had low anxiety, 7(11.6%) had moderate anxiety and 1(1.7%) had potentially concerning level of anxiety.

In post-test, out of 60 caregivers of cancer patients 58(96.7%) had low anxiety, 2(3.33%) had moderate anxiety and none (0%) had potentially concerning level of anxiety.

The pre-test mean score among caregivers of cancer patients in radiation oncology wards was 7.08 with a standard deviation of 8.943 and the post-test mean score was 2.28 with a standard deviation of 5.169 and the t-value obtained was 6.346 which was statistically significant at p<0.01 level. The results indicate that there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test anxiety scores after psychoeducation. Thus, the null hypothesis [H₀1] which was stated that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test anxiety scores among the caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards was accepted.

The third objective of the study was to associate the level of anxiety among caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards with their selected demographic variables. The findings of the study revealed that family income per month (0.027), quality of life (0.035) at $p < 0.05$ level and level of education (0.00), occupation (0.00), area of residence (0.00) at $p < 0.01$ level had significant association with their post-test anxiety scores. Thus, the hypothesis [H₀2] which was stated that there is no significant association between the level of anxiety among the caregivers of cancer patients with their selected demographic variables was rejected.

CONCLUSION

Evidence from this investigation revealed that psychoeducation offered to caregivers of cancer patients brought about a reduction in their level of anxiety. The psychoeducation offered will help the caregivers to alleviate care giving burden and enhance coping abilities by changing their knowledge, skills and attitude towards caring a patient with cancer. Thus, the enhanced coping abilities are sure to reduce their anxiety which helps them to improve their quality of life, which in turn helps them to provide the best possible care to the patient.

LIMITATIONS

1. The study is limited to 60 caregivers of cancer patients admitted in Radiation Oncology Wards at SVIMS, Tirupati.
2. The effectiveness of psychoeducation is limited to post-test administered after psychoeducation.
3. The study is limited to informal caregivers.

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