The Impact of Palliative Care on Quality of Life and Emotional Well-being in Terminal-Stage Cancer Patients and Their Families.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering support and belief in me provided the strength to persevere through every stage of this research. To my parents, for their endless encouragement and sacrifices, to my mentors, whose guidance helped shape both this work and my growth as a scholar, and my respected supervisor, Dr. Tanzeela, for her continuous guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the research process. Your inspiration and love made this journey possible.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to understand the life experiences of patients who have advanced-stage cancer and their family caregivers and more specifically their views of palliative care, emotional well-being and quality of life. Cancer in its progressive stages not only takes a toll on patients physically but also tires on the psychological and spiritual coping of the individuals besides putting a lot of burden on family caregivers. Knowing about these experiences is critical to improving more balanced and caring responses to care. This study utilized Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to gain insights into the way in which learners make sense of their illness and caregiving experiences. Patients as well as family members were interviewed in depth, which meant that the study obtained convergent and divergent views. The result of the analysis was five superordinate themes: faith and spiritual coping, physical burden of illness, psychological adjustment, life priorities and meaning, and family support and resilience. The results indicated that despite all the involved physical pain, emotional stress, and uncertainty, the patients and caregivers were quite strong, optimistic, and ready to accept the situation, the main source of which was strong faith and spirituality. Palliative care was perceived largely as being helpful not merely to reduce physical suffering but to help in gaining emotional relief as well as building resilience. Caregivers also reported that they were tired and stressed but received strength through family support and dependence upon religious faith. Patients highlighted a new meaning of life- in terms of health, prayer and wellness of loved ones. Finally, the study reveals the necessity to treat both the needs of patients and caregivers that are also complex in palliative care. Incorporating the medical, emotional, spiritual, and familial aspects, healthcare providers may improve the care of individuals facing the advanced-stage cancer situation, in turn, improving the quality of their lives.

Keywords: palliative care, advanced-stage cancer, care-takers, psychic health, quality of life

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