

Defining Contentment in Quality of Life in the Context of Breast Cancer Experience: A Meta-Synthesis

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to define contentment in quality of life in the context of breast cancer experience through a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies.

Method: A meta-synthesis was conducted using a search strategy in the following databases: Scopus, Medline, CINAHL, and PsycINFO. The search terms used were: "breast cancer", "quality of life", "contentment", and "meta-synthesis". The studies included in the synthesis were those that met the following criteria: (1) qualitative studies; (2) studies that focused on the experience of breast cancer; (3) studies that focused on quality of life; and (4) studies that focused on contentment.

Results: The synthesis identified four main themes related to contentment in quality of life: (1) personal well-being; (2) social support; (3) information and knowledge; and (4) control and participation.

Conclusion: Contentment in quality of life is a complex and multidimensional concept that is influenced by various factors, including personal well-being, social support, information and knowledge, and control and participation.

Keywords: Breast cancer; Quality of life; Qualitative analysis; Contentment; Quality of life

Introduction

Breast cancer is the most common malignancy among women worldwide. In some regions in the western world, it is the most common cause of death from cancer in women [1]. Mortality in breast cancer has been reduced because of early detection and treatment, but also due to improvements in the delivery of care [1,2]. At least half of the women diagnosed with breast cancer will survive, including those living in developing countries. In the developed countries, survival from breast cancer has slowly increased and is now at the level of 85%, but survival in developing countries remains at around 50-60% [3]. Despite the improvement in survival rates, a diagnosis of breast cancer initiates a complex adjustment process that may last for years. Survival statistics cannot capture the physiologic, psychological, and sociologic impact of cancer or the loss of productive years across all segments of the life span [2,4,5].

A breast cancer diagnosis and its treatment is a stressful life event, with profound and obvious consequences for all aspects of human life [4,6], and it will impact the Quality of Life (QoL).

Quality of life (QoL) is not easy to define since it is a conceptually subjective term, which refers to a complex multidimensional concept [7,8]. QoL was used in a study as a person's sense of well-being which stems from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with areas of life that are important to the person [9]. QoL description is based on biomedical and behavioural science domains, including normal life, achievement of personal goals, social utility, natural capacity, and happiness/satisfaction. Two

Existential issues the concepts of well-being and life satisfaction i.e. QoL. Existential issues that should be taken into consideration are fear of recurrence of the disease, fear of one's own existence and own life, e.g. 'of one's own death. At this point, the only thing that matters is survival, even when considering the irreparable damage to physical, psychological, or social aspects of one's life as consequences of breast cancer diagnosis [7,14]. Recent research on QoL outcomes in long-term survivors is promising but time alone is not a sufficient predictor of psychological adjustment and QoL [15]. When evaluating holistically the QoL of women treated for breast cancer, all spheres of everyday functioning should be taken into consideration: physical, cognitive, emotional and social.

Based on previous research, the following research question was addressed: what is the impact of breast cancer diagnosis and breast cancer treatment on women's contentment. was determined by a process of meta-synthesis of the qualitative articles published between 2000 and 2011.

Defining contentment

No single, universally accepted of contentment exists. Many are clearly related to phenomena, including a psychoanalytic perspective. Contentment is a human experience of a satisfying calmness, but it is lived within possible or remembered harsh conditions. Contentment means assenting to or being willing to accept circumstances or a proposed course of action [16,17]. In a comparative study of cancer survivors they were found to have poorer health and well-being than the general population. Despite this poorer health, the majority of cancer survivors reported satisfaction with care services [18]. Contentment seems to be a part of QoL as in surveys contentment is treated as synonymous with satisfaction [12,19]. Contentment is as a state of being feeling tranquil and happy. It can also be a source of satisfaction and arises from sympathetic engagement with family and friends [20]. Perceiving and being thankful for the positivity in the self and in the world is a state of being happy and healthy, and gives a sense of well-being. harsh circumstances could give a more meaningful life and strengthen transcendental aspects, such as religiosity and spirituality [21].

Contentment is also described with another synonym;

Gratitude is about personality, and one's disposition to notice, appreciate and respond with grateful emotions and thankfulness to other people's acts of benevolence and sympathy [22]. Breast cancer patients' gratitude is strongly associated with post-traumatic growth, reduced distress and increased positive emotions, but surprisingly not with psychological well-being [23].

Contentment could be seen as QoL and linked to satisfaction and adaptation to the life situation. Contentment in this sense is; QoL as what the person there living the life says it is.

Material and Method

report is a qualitative meta-synthesis, i.e. an interpretive integration of qualitative that are themselves an interpretive synthesis of data comprising coherent and integrated descriptions or explanations of events, concepts, or phenomena [24-26]. A meta-synthesis is an integration that more than the sum of the individual data sets because it provides an innovative interpretation of the. Such interpretations are conclusions derived from

examining all the articles in a sample as a collective group, presenting interpretations which are not found in any one article [24]. process of meta-synthesis used in this study included three processes: meta-data analysis, meta-method, and meta-theory [26]. meta-data analysis required the researcher to critically examine multiple accounts of a phenomenon to reveal similarities and discrepancies among reports. Hermeneutics was used to guide the meta-synthesis in this study. process of meta-method analysis required an analysis of the rigor and soundness of the research methods used in each of the studies reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the methods and how they. Meta-theory analysis required the researchers to scrutinize the underlying theoretical perspectives of each study that met the criteria for analysis to ensure that the were interpreted appropriately. Finally, the process of meta-synthesis required the researchers to reintegrate all the ideas that had been deconstructed in these three processes to realize a new interpretation of a phenomenon that accounts for the data, method, and theory by which the phenomenon has been studied by others. focus of this report will be on the from the meta-data analysis.

Sample

Relevant qualitative research studies were located and retrieved using computer searches in CINAHL, Psych info, Academic Search Premier, Pubmed and Scopus. articles selected for this synthesis met the following inclusion criteria: (1) the study focused on women with breast cancer; (2) there were explicit references to the use of qualitative research/studies or studies that combined qualitative and quantitative research, but included a clear presentation of qualitative (3) the study focused on women's perspectives and experiences of quality of life and life situation due to breast cancer. that i were restrictions related to the date the research was published, i.e., published from eeeeeeeeT b a nati i m Mwht/

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Table 1: Primary research features.

b size of the research sample reported in each article ranged from 4 to 74, with a total sample size in all 12 articles of 322 (mean sample size 18.5). women in these studies were aged 28 to 91 and represented countries; Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Great Britain, Iran, Norway, Sweden, and the USA. data from the 322 women were based on individual interviews, in one case combined with focus group interviews. All articles had been published from 2002 to 2011.

In the second step, the researchers used a Hermeneutic Appraisal to reinterpret the statements made by subjects in each original study from the analytical perspective of Contentment/Contentedness. Hermeneutic Appraisal process contributed to an understanding of how the methodology used in the original research had been applied to study a phenomenon and how that methodology had shaped the researcher's knowledge of the phenomenon being examined [26]. appraisal was not used to critique the quality of the studies. Instead, the research designs of primary research articles were compared and contrasted to identify the underlying assumptions of research methodologies, as well as the reported [24].

authors of the articles meeting the criteria for this meta-synthesis described the methods used as qualitative; using phenomenology, narrativism, constructivist qualitative approach, interpretive description or qualitative content analysis. Some researchers used phenomenology and vcess con A MM rc r hesim y, nar

Meaning of life

main idea connected to a conception of contentment is that life gives meaning. Due to the breast cancer experience life becomes meaningful. Everything in life becomes meaningful, even the small things or facts in daily life. aspects of breast cancer experience allowed women to meaning in life. One of these aspects was the awareness of own mortality which presents a deeper meaning of life [28].

Some women started thinking about the possibilities of 'meaning' in getting cancer. According to that way of thinking the breast cancer experience would give them personal mental strength and valuable life experiences, as if they had come out of this experience as wiser persons [29].

in a certain way, due to the breast cancer experience, values are changed in women's lives. From now on, friendship is important and solidarity is essential for life. It made these women see how wonderful it is to be alive, to have friends, and to be close to nature [30]. For them, all things in nature become deeply with meaning and made them get insights from appreciating the nature. got new meaning to their situation and as consequence to their lives, and that put matters into perspective. learn to live in the present moment and they experience everyday life as becoming more important. Even work activities they enjoy it as meaningful [28].

Self-respect/self-value

second main idea and one of the most important aspects of contentment, considering the context breast cancer experience, is the need of feeling valued and respected. And for these women, the

Contentment is then a matter of living life intensely, in the best way women could and that is reaching high quality of life from their new perspective of "living with" breast cancer.

Comfort

Concerning the conception of comfort, the fusions we in the articles were described from positive or negative aspects of life related to the breast cancer experience. comfort is an idea connected to positive emotional responses, to self-control in life, to live life as normal as possible, to an optimistic point of view and a realistic planning of future, and also to have support for living in the present situation.

Positive emotional responses

main idea that composes the concept of comfort is related to the way women deal with the emotional responses they experience due to breast cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Having a breast cancer diagnosis provokes powerful emotional responses. Women were experiencing these powerful emotions and they feel like having to face the reality: having a breast cancer. emotional responses can be positive or negative and, as consequence,

Women need to feel they are able to work and to live a normal life despite the limitations imposed by the breast cancer experience. If they feel like facing [33] for performing mother role in home due to side [34] or any kind of inability to perform daily activities as before they can feel distress and misunderstood. [35] situation makes them feel unpleased with the situation. [36] having limitation in functioning; not being able to perform things they wanted to perform made the feel frustrated and [37] with the present situation [33,37]. [38] to keep home life as normal as possible makes them feel with the situation.

In the same way, if working activities are experienced as a good thing for women and they feel able to continue working this allows them to manage daily activities and get inner satisfaction in the situation [30,37].

Feeling able to perform daily activities at home or at work allows them to have a positive self-value due to feeling secure in their role as wife, mother and grandmother or even as working women [32,35,39].

[40] brings them satisfaction. So, it is important that partners, familiars and working colleagues continue seeing them as the women they were before and this made them [41] with the situation [29].

idea of contentedness by getting satisfaction is also related to the experience of being among other women with breast cancer and seeing them all carrying on and still continuing to live; fully lives,

Conclusion

breast cancer experience has powerful impacts on women's lives, and their QoL. QoL is as contentment, comfort and contentedness.

present meta-synthesis demonstrates that contentment in the context of breast cancer can be as living life intensely, in the best way women could, searching for strategies for reaching a high

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