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Relationship between uncertainty in illness and social support in family members of COPD patients

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Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is one of the common respiratory diseases with high and increasing morbidity and mortality. The overall prevalence of COPD was 8.2% in China. Family members of COPD patients may experience uncertainty regarding to the nature of patients illness and its treatment. Uncertainty in illness has been negatively associated with social support. However, the relationship between uncertainty in illness and social support of COPD patients' family members has not been previously studied. The purpose of this study was to describe the status of uncertainty in illness and social support in family members of COPD patients and to explore their relationship. A total of 144 COPD patients' family members were recruited by a convenience sampling method in this cross-sectional survey. The General Information Questionnaire, Mishel Uncertainty in Illness Scale for Family Members (PPUS-FM) and Social Support Rating Scale (SSRS) were used to collect data. The total score of PPUS-FM was 81.75 ± 8.457 and the score of SSRS was 37.19 ± 6.560 . The total score of uncertainty in illness, the score of ambiguity, complexity and inconsistency were negatively associated with the score of social support and its subscale ($P < 0.05$, $P < 0.01$). The findings revealed that family members of COPD patients experiencing a high level of uncertainty. A significantly negative correlation was found between uncertainty and social support. Therefore, health care professionals should take effective actions to increase family members' social support, decrease their uncertainty in illness, so as to improve their physical and psychological health.

Biography

Huimin Zhao has completed her Bachelor of Nursing at Shanxi Medical University (2012 to 2016). She is now a Master's student at School of Nursing, Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology. She won the national scholarship certificate in 2014, was named as "Excellent Graduate" of Shanxi Medical University in 2016 and got the qualification of recommended exemption graduate. Her research focuses on aged care. Her abstracts have been accepted in 37th Asia-Pacific Nursing and Medicare Summit and International Conference and Exhibition on Nursing (ICEN-2018). Her paper has been accepted by a Chinese core journal. She has co-authored several published articles indexed by SCI. She is currently participating in one research project.

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