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An application of representational approach based patient education to improve fatigue management in systemic lupus erythematosus in Taiwan

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Purpose: The purpose of this case study was to delineate the experience of using representational approach based patient education in caring for a 47-year-old female subject suffering from fatigue of systemic lupus erythematosus.

Methods: This qualitative single-case study used the seven key concepts of representational approach to patient education for managing fatigue. The subject was approached twice a week during hospitalization from November 24 to December 3, 2015. Telephone and outpatient clinic follow-up was conducted once respectively after her discharge. Data was collected and analyzed from patient interviews, chart reviews, and weekly nursing care summaries. A numeric rating scale of 0 to 10 (0 indicating no fatigue; 10 indicating worst fatigue) was used to evaluate her fatigue level before and after education session; and her self-care ability was also evaluated during outpatient clinic follow-up.

Results: After sessions of representational approach based education, the subject reported improved self-care skills as well as fatigue symptom management techniques. On a numeric rating scale of 0 to 10, self-reported fatigue level improved from 8 to 4.

Conclusions: Findings from this case study indicates that representational approach based patient education can effectively improve the subject's self-care and fatigue symptom management skills. This result further implies that assessment of illness representations and plan interventions accordingly provides positive coping behaviors and improves patient outcomes. However, the application and study of representational approach based education in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus in Taiwan is limited. Research with a large sample size should be conducted to further acknowledge the findings in this single-case study.

Biography

HSUAN-JU KUO completed her BSN from National Taiwan University, College of Medicine. After three years of practice as a registered nurse in Endocrinology/Rheumatology ward of National Taiwan University Hospital, she is currently a first-year graduate student for her master's degree in Department of Nursing, College of Medicine, National Taiwan University.

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