

3rd Euro Nursing & Medicare Summit

July 27-29, 2015 Valencia, Spain

Reconstructing life meaning of the elderly with cancer in one public residential home of Taiwan

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This study is to explore the reconstructing life meaning of the elderly with cancer living in a public residential home. The informants were three male and three female who were in average age of 78. In-depth and semi-structured interviews were used for data collection. The qualitative categorization and scenario analysis were combined to carry out a summative analysis and discussion. The main research results are shown as follow:

1. The interviewees' perceptions towards their cancer are categorized into four aspects:
 - (1) Physical: weakness, powerlessness; unbearably pain; and sleeplessness;
 - (2) Psychological: surprised; depressed; worried;
 - (3) Social: interpersonal alienation; family alienation;
 - (4) Spiritual: emptiness, hopelessness; regret.
2. The interviewees' comments towards the meaning of their own life include:
 - (1) achievement and self-affirmation;
 - (2) altruism and worthiness;
 - (3) brave pain overcomer;
 - (4) healthy equals happiness and live in the moment;
 - (5) destiny surrender;
 - (6) religion is for spiritual sustenance;
 - (7) treasuring family relationships;
 - (8) facing and accepting death
3. How the interviewees reconstruct their meaning of life after being diagnosed with cancer:
 - (1) Family and religious beliefs are the source for reconstructing life
 - (2) Adjust perspectives and create new opportunities
 - (a) Viewing cancer as a way to get rid of karma and for gaining wisdom
 - (b) Spiritual enrichment is more important than material benefits
 - (c) Cherishing family values
 - (d) Valuing every moment
 - (e) Immense gratitude to give back to others
 - (3) Restructure life order toward a new life
 - (a) Making up for family relationships
 - (b) Keeping in a healthy lifestyle
 - (c) Adjusting attitudes toward a new life
 - (d) Participating in social activities actively
 - (e) Enriching spiritual life.

The research results provide concrete suggestions for governmental policies, practitioners, elder cancer patients and future research.

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