Evaluation of a WeChat-based life review program for cancer patients: A quasi-experimental study

Huimin Xiao, Xiaoling Zhang

School of Nursing, Fujian Medical University, Fuzhou, China

Correspondence to: Prof. Huimin Xiao Email: huimin_xiao@126.com

INTRODUCTION

Life review is effective in improving the psychospiritual well-being of palliative patients. However, traditional life review programs are limitedly applied in clinical practice.

METHODS

This was a non-concurrent controlled quasi-experimental design study. 92 cancer patients were recruited from April 2017 to February 2018, with 44 patients in the control group receiving routine care and 48 in the experimental group receiving a six-week WeChat-based life review program (WBLRP) plus routine care. The WBLRP consisted of four-section e-life review interviews and four life review modules. The interviews covered each participant's entire life, including the present (cancer experience), adulthood, childhood and adolescence, and a summary of their life. The life review modules included Memory Prompts, Review Extraction, Mind Space, and E-legacy products. Compliance with the program, difficulty in participation, satisfaction with the program, anxiety, depression, self-transcendence, meaning in life and hope were measured.

RESULTS

All experimental participants who completed the program used the WeChat platform. 39 participants had no difficulties in operating the platform, and 40 were satisfied with the program. Statistically significant effects were identified on anxiety, depression, and self-transcendence. An increase in the levels of meaning in life and hope was observed in the experimental group after the program (Tables 1 and 2).

CONCLUSIONS

The innovative WeChat-based life review program is a promising non-pharmacological intervention in improving psycho-spiritual well-being of cancer patients. It provides an alternative approach to deliver psychological interventions for cancer patients in community.

TABLE 1. Comparison of outcome measures between groups at pre-test and post-test

Measure	Time	Control group Mean (SD)	Experimental group Mean (SD)	t	p
Anxiety	Pre-test	31.50 (6.515)	29.84 (4.524)	-1.833	0.710 ^a
	Post-test	32.10 (5.525)	25.93 (3.738)	6.031	0.001 ^b
Depression	Pre-test	36.83 (8.097)	34.18 (4.637)	1.852	0.069 ^a
	Post-test	39.02 (7.475)	30.48 (4.369)	6.434	0.001 ^b
Self-transcendence	Pre-test	43.05 (6.105)	40.75 (6.521)	1.685	0.096 ^a
	Post-test	43.90 (6.585)	53.48 (4.583)	-7.791	0.001 ^b
Meaning in life	Pre-test	50.52 (7.747)	54.11 (8.162)	-2.090	0.04 ^c
	Post-test	49.43 (8.642)	56.64 (10.109)	-3.546	0.001 ^b
Hope	Pre-test	36.31 (2.934)	35.86 (3.092)	0.685	0.495 ^a
	Post-test	35.14 (3.482)	36.36 (3.293)	-1.671	0.098 ^a

TABLE 2. Comparison of outcome measures within groups

Measure	Group	Pre-test	Post-test	t	p
Anxiety	Control group	31.50 (6.515)	29.84 (4.524)	-0.726	0.472 ^a
	Experimental group	29.84 (4.524)	25.93 (3.738)	5.330	0.001 ^b
Depression	Control group	36.83 (8.097)	39.02 (7.475)	-2.054	0.046
	Experimental group	34.18 (4.637)	30.48 (4.369)	4.423	0.001 ^b
Self-transcendence	Control group	43.05 (6.105)	43.90 (6.585)	-0.723	0.474 ^a
	Experimental group	40.75 (6.521)	53.48 (4.583)	-2.244	0.03 ^c
Meaning in life	Control group	50.52 (7.747)	49.43 (8.642)	0.785	0.437
	Experimental group	54.11 (8.162)	56.64 (10.109)	-1.877	0.067
Hope	Control group	36.31 (2.934)	35.14 (3.482)	2.042	0.048
	Experimental group	35.86 (3.092)	36.36 (3.293)	-0.972	0.337 ^a

^ap > 0.05.

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