Online support for patients on chemotherapy using art therapy method Neurographica

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Abstract

Art therapy is effective to patients but often people don't use it due to have not art skills. Neurographica is a method which provides everyone the opportunity to get success the first time.

The use of online therapy is increasing and this could also extend to delivering art therapy services for cancer patients. Online therapy may address issues for cancer patients with weakened immune systems. Online therapy will enable the cancer patient to engage in therapy without being exposed to possible external unsafe environments. The other reason of online sessions for cancer patients is limited access to psychological support in hospitals in Russia. Studies using online art therapy found that being able to participate in group activities online. It gave the participants a sense of connection with others sharing the same experience through their cancer diagnosis. The study has been shown efficacy online course for oncology women patients under chemotherapy treatment. After four weeks online thematic lessons of Neurographica the quality of life increased, emotional distress and anxiety declined.

Introduction

Art therapy is particularly useful for expressing emotions that are tough to verbalize. The creative art can be a healing process. Literature review shows that use of art therapy during the cancer treatment may be helpful in three primary ways. First, it is thought to be a relaxing and creative outlet. Second, participants feel that it gives them an opportunity to feel listened to. And third, it provides an avenue to express emotions and search for meaning in their lives. Through developing a new form of self-expression, the art creative was found to have positive effects on personal coping for people living with cancer.

The study was directed to looking for effects of online 4-weeks course of Neurographica. There was focused on "wow-effect" after drawing, how the psychological state of patients changes from the start to the end of creative a picture and how this change influences to the quality of life. The course was realized online for patients from different parts of Russia

Method and Materials

Neurographica is a modern approach to create drawing for self-expression and reshape inner attitude to a stressful situation. Neurographica is developed by Pavel Piskarev, Ph.D. It combines unconscious activity and visual images and symbols and cognitive processing of emotional experience. This method does not require any art skills and produces results with any person. There is special algorithm, using spontaneous expressive doodle archetypal symbols (circle, triangle and square).

The research included 32 female subjects, all of whom were on chemotherapy. Women of age 35-62 come from different corners of Russia, from Siberia to Saint Petersburg.

The program has been developed in such a way so as not only to hold art therapy sessions, but also to teach patients how to use the psychological self-care method. The online program lasts four weeks, one class each week. Female patients were also assigned homework to make Neurographica drawings similar to those made at coached classes. Short-term program provides clients' engagement through the course from the start to the end. For compliance we selected women by depression level, patients with clinical depression was not allowed to the group, for them offered individual psychotherapy including medical treatment with psychiatrist.

Results

Emotional state improved at the end of each class due to reduction of anger and the need for help, improvement of depression and decrease of distress. After 4 weeks, depression, state anxiety and some values according to the EORTC QLQ – C30 scale were improved in each female subject.

Discussion

There were a few obstacles common for online psychological group therapy such as low engagement to online work. We need to understand the users' experiences with online Neurographica interventions more because it is a key to improving efficacy.

Conclusion

Online interventions have a potential to fill an important gap in quality cancer care by augmenting limited available mental health services. Neurographica might be used in oncology practice as an internet based psychological support.