THE EFFECT OF HEALTH LITERACY ON SELF-EFFICACY AND QUALITY OF LIFE: CANCER PATIENTS

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INTRODUCTION-OBJECTIVE

It is valuable in preventing negative health outcomes that patients are knowledgeable in the management of cancer and that they reflect this knowledge into their care. This research was conducted to evaluate the effect of health literacy in cancer patients on self-efficacy and quality of life.

METHODS

This cross-sectional, descriptive study was conducted with 111 cancer patients who were monitored and treated at the policlinics and clinics of Medical Oncology in a hospital in Eskisehir. The data were collected by means of "Individual Presentation Form", "Health Literacy Questionnaire-European Union (HLS-EU)", "Self-Efficacy for Managing Chronic Disease Scale (SMCD)" and "European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer Quality of Life Scale (EORTC QLQ-C30). The data were presented as mean±standard deviation for continuous variables and frequency and percentages for categorical variables. Mann-Whitney-U, One-Way ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to compare sociodemographic variables and disease characteristics with HLS-EU-Q47, SEMCD and EORTC QLQ-C30 scores. Spearman correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between HLS-EU-Q47, SEMCD and EORTC QLQ-C30. In the analysis results, $p<0.005$ was considered significant.

Table 1. Correlation between age, duration of disease, HLS-EU-Q47, SEMCD and EORTC QLQ-C30 subscales

Characteristics		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	r							
	p							
2. Duration of disease	r	.135						
	p	0.157						
3. Frequency of applying to the health care institution	r	.062	.012					
	p	0.517	0.901					
4. HLS-EU-Q47	r	-.107	-.130	-.0184				
	p	0.265	0.175	0.054				
5. SEMCD	r	.050	.075	-.0184	.032			
	p	0.603	0.434	0.053	0.741			
6. Functional subscale score	r	.007	-.131	-.093	.107	.531		
	p	0.844	0.170	0.332	0.262	<0.001		
7. Symptom subscale score	r	-.080	.077	.066	-.334	-.382	-.667	
	p	0.406	0.421	0.492	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
8. General Health subscale score	r	-.019	.016	-.084	.199	.411	.264	-.409
	p	0.845	0.879	0.383	0.036	<0.001	0.005	<0.001

RESULTS

The mean age of 111 patients who participated in the study was 55.62 ± 12.75 years. Of the participants, 74.8% were female ($n=83$), 56.8% were primary school graduates ($n=63$) and 61.3% were diagnosed with breast cancer ($n=68$). This study found that the HLS-EU-Q47, SEMCD and EORTC QLQ-C30 scores of patients did not differ by sociodemographic characteristics and cancer diagnoses ($p>0.05$) (Graphic 1), but they showed statistically significant difference according to their stages of disease. This study also found a positive and significant relationship between the HLS-EU-Q47 score and the general health subscale score of the EORTC QLQ-C30 scale ($r=0.199$, $p=0.036$), and a negative and significant relationship with the symptom subscale score ($r=-0.334$, $p<0.01$).

Graphic 1. HLS-EU-Q47, SEMCD and EORTC QLQ-C30 scales subscale scores according to stages of disease.

DISCUSSION

The results of studies on this field (1,2,3) are similar to those of our study and as health literacy level of cancer patients and chronic disease management self efficacy score increase, general health status increases and disease symptoms decrease.

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