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Self-Management Experiences of Cancer Survivors: A Qualitative Study

Abstract:

Cancer, once primarily viewed as an acute illness, has increasingly become a chronic condition as advancements in treatment extend patients' lives. This shift has led to the need for cancer survivors to adopt self-management strategies to manage the physical and emotional effects of the disease. Cancer survivors, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, face unique challenges in self-managing their conditions. This study aimed to explore the home self-management experiences of adult Omani cancer survivors. A qualitative exploratory design was used, employing semi-structured interviews with 36 Omani cancer survivors. The sample consisted predominantly of women (66.7%), with an average age of 53.1 years. Most participants (52.8%) were diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer. Thematic analysis revealed that participants demonstrated a strong sense of autonomy, frequently making independent decisions regarding their care. Faith emerged as a critical coping mechanism, providing emotional resilience, while family support was central to both practical and emotional care. This reliance on family reflects cultural differences compared to Western models, where formal support services are more common. Technology, particularly social media, played a mixed role in self-management; younger survivors used it for health information, while older participants were more skeptical and preferred to rely on healthcare providers. The self-management strategies of Omani cancer survivors are deeply influenced by cultural, familial, and religious factors. While autonomy and faith are central to their coping strategies, there remains a need for culturally tailored self-management programs that integrate traditional support systems and modern healthcare resources, including digital literacy education. This study underscores the importance of recognizing cultural contexts in developing effective cancer survivorship interventions.

Biography

Mohammad Al Qadire is a Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, Al Al-Bayt University, Jordan. He specializes in oncology nursing, palliative care, and cancer pain management, with a focus on improving patient outcomes. Dr. Al Qadire has published over 125 articles and is recognized among the top 2% of scientists globally.