

Outcome of chemotherapy counseling by pharmacists on psychological effects and self esteem among oncology patients in a government hospital in Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Chemotherapy is the most common form of treatment among cancer patients. It is also known to cause many physical and psychological side-effects.

Objective: This study developed, implemented and evaluated the outcome of a chemotherapy counseling module among oncology patients by pharmacists based on their psychological effects (depression, anxiety) and self-esteem.

Methods: A randomized, single blind, placebo controlled study was conducted among 162 patients undergoing chemotherapy in a government hospital in Malaysia.

Intervention: Counseling sessions were conducted using the 'Managing Patients on Chemotherapy' module for oncology patients undergoing chemotherapy at each treatment cycle.

Outcome: The outcome of repetitive chemotherapy counseling using the module was determined at baseline, first follow-up, second follow-up and third follow-up.

Results: The findings revealed that there was significant improvement in the intervention group as compared to the control group with large effect size on depression ($p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.394$), anxiety ($p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.232$) and self-esteem ($p = 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.541$).

Conclusion: Repetitive counseling using the 'Managing Patients on Chemotherapy' module was found to be effective in improving psychological effects and self-esteem among patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Keyword: Cancer; Chemotherapy; Counseling; Pharmacist; Psychological effects; Self-esteem