APPROPRIATE CLOTHING DURING CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS, A FACTOR OF WELL-BEING

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Introduction : The literature tells us that a higher level of subjective well-being in the individual promotes good health. However, when faced with cancer, a certain number of symptoms are directly associated with the disease or appear when the disease is discovered (Knowles et al., 2013). How of the disease progresses depends, at least in part, on the representations associated with it, of which well-being is a part (Lalande, 2016). This leads us to questioning whether specifically designed clothing during chemotherapy, could promote well-being and thus affect the progression of the disease.

Methods : A survey was sent to 483 people suffering from cancer and who had purchased clothing specifically designed to help tolerating chemotherapy administration. 42 patients respondents completed to the study, allowing a impact study. They were surveyed about their emotional state (14 emotions studied, including 7 positive and 7 negative), and symptoms (15 of them), at three different times: from the initial diagnosis; during chemotherapy treatments without suitable clothing; and during chemotherapy treatments with appropriate clothing. Comparisons between these were carried out by chi square test, without adjustment for the multiplicity of tests. This is a first exploratory study, aimed at generating hypotheses.

Results :

1) There was statistically significant, differences with appropriate clothing during chemotherapy, with patients perceiving a reduction in the worsening and appearance of new symptoms.
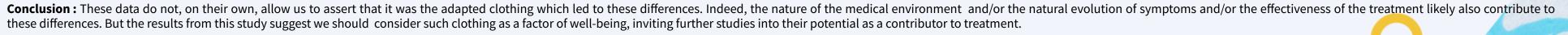
	Worsening	Appearance	Improvement	Maintenance	Not present
Symptoms perceived during chemotherapy treatment **without** suitable clothing	98	79	32	157	264
Symptoms perceived during chemotherapy treatment **with** suitable clothing	48	43	34	225	280

Table 1 : Number of responses associated with the 15 symptoms proposed for times 2 (without clothing) and 3 (with clothing), n = 42 subjects with cancer - Chi 2 calculated > Chi 2 table (p = 0.05), therefore the distribution of the number of responses to the symptoms perceived at times 2 and 3 is not homogeneous, and is significantly different.

2) The well-being experienced, the positive image of oneself, of one's illness and of one's treatment, are also significantly associated with the use of adapted clothing during chemotherapy.

	State of being **without** suitable clothing	State of being **with** suitable clothing
Positive image of oneself, one's illness and its treatment	49	144
Negative image of oneself, one's illness and its treatment	107	36

Table 2 : Number of subjects' responses to the two questions "How did you feel about the medical environment during your chemotherapy treatment without vs. with suitable clothing ?" » at times 2 (without suitable clothing) and 3 (with suitable clothing). The answers were proposed, each subject being able to tick the number of answers they wanted. 6 responses are associated with a good image of oneself, one's illness and its treatment (indicated in bold), and 6 responses are associated with a negative image of oneself, one's illness and one's treatment (indicated in non-bold), n = 42 subject.

Conclusion : These data do not, on their own, allow us to assert that it was the adapted clothing which led to these differences. Indeed, the nature of the medical environment and/or the natural evolution of symptoms and/or the effectiveness of the treatment likely also contribute to these differences. But the results from this study suggest we should consider such clothing as a factor of well-being, inviting further studies into their potential as a contributor to treatment.

References :
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