

A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE SELF-MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE OF LIVER CANCER PATIENTS

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Introduction

Effective self-management can help cancer patients cope with symptoms, reduce treatment side effects, and promote maintenance of healthy behaviors. Self-management strategies vary based on disease characteristics, and self-management support must meet patient needs. Previous studies on cancer self-management experience have mostly focused on cancers such as breast cancer and colorectal cancer, and few studies have investigated the self-management experience of liver cancer patients. The purpose of this study was to explore liver cancer patients' experiences of self-management.

Methods

A phenomenological research method and purposive sampling were adopted. Patients were recruited from outpatient clinics in Taiwan. Data was collected through in-depth interviews lasting approximately one hour. The content analysis method was used to analyze text data through repeated reading, analyzing its intrinsic meaning in depth, extracting meaningful sentences, coding, and classifying subtopics and themes.

Table1. Demographic and disease characteristics of the study participants

Case	Age	Sex	Education	Marital status	Current employment status	BCLC Stage
1	64	Male	High school	Widower	Retired	B
2	61	Female	Middle school	Married	Unemployed	A
3	60	Male	Middle school	Married	Full time employee	A
4	80	Female	High school	Widowed	Retired	B
5	56	Male	High school	Married	Full time employee	B
6	43	Male	College	Single	Full time employee	A
7	47	Male	High school	Single	Full time employee	A
8	63	Male	Middle school	Married	Retired	A
9	63	Male	High school	Widower	Retired	0
10	68	Male	Lower school	Devoiced	Retired	A
11	68	Male	Lower school	Married	Retired	B
12	52	Male	College	Married	Full time employee	A

Results

Twelves patients with liver cancer participated in the study. The main themes of patients' self-management experiences and support needs were:

Theme	Subthemes	Explanations
Suffering from liver cancer reminds me to pay attention to my health	Pay attention to my health	Having liver cancer reminded me to pay attention to my health and noticed that I had previously neglected regular health monitoring.
	Realize my health was not good	I didn' t take good care of myself before and didn' t realize my health was not good until I discovered the problem.
	I must face it and solve it.	If liver cancer is inevitable, then there is no need for me to worry, I just need to trust my doctor and follow treatment plan to deal with it.
Try my best to stay healthy and return to my normal life	Take care of myself	I will do my best to care for myself and seek support and information to stay healthy, such as taking prescribed medications and using complementary and alternative medicines to relieve symptoms or manage illness.
	Maintain a healthy lifestyle	Try to take easy on life and work on establishing a healthy lifestyle, such as quit drinking alcohol and smoking, staring, and maintaining regular physical activity, developing healthy eating habits, and taking supplements.
	Try to live a normal life	My body is the most important thing and I must take good care of it so that I can live a normal life.
Not to be a burden to my family and be alert to the possibility of cancer recurrence	Sorry for making my family worry about me	I felt guilty because I had let my family take care of me and made them worry about whether I could recover from my illness.
	Worried about not being able to work	I worried about not being able to return to work due to illness, considering retiring and spending more time with family.
	Regular follow-up for preventing cancer recurrence	I will have regular follow-up and scheduled checkups to address concerns about the cancer recurrence.

Conclusions

Self-management allows patients to participate in the treatment of the disease, control or reduce the impact of the disease on their physical health, and make changes in related psychological problems, role adjustments, and daily health-related behaviors. Good health self-management may change a patient's clinical course and quality of life. Therefore, we hope that by understanding the health self-management experience of liver cancer patients, we can provide a reference for formulating health self-management support measures for patients in the future.