

Experiences of Chemotherapy as a Treatment Modality Among The Patients With Cancer Attending Chemotherapy

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Abstract

Chemotherapy is one of the major treatment modalities for treating patients with cancer. The present study aimed to explore the experiences of chemotherapy among patients with cancer. A descriptive qualitative study was carried out with fifteen patients attending chemotherapy at the National Hospital Kandy in Sri Lanka. A pre-tested interview guide was used as the data collection tool. Ethical clearance was obtained from the ethical committee of the Faculty of Allied Health Science, University of Peradeniya. Both male & female patients aged 18 years or older, those who have completed three or more chemotherapy cycles were interviewed. Data collection was stopped once data saturation occurred. Hence 15 in-depth interviews were conducted. Thematic analysis was performed to analyze and interpret the meaning of the gathered qualitative data. Investigator triangulation was performed to enhance the credibility of the study. Three themes emerged. The first theme 'Experiencing chemotherapy negatively' comprised four subthemes: chemotherapy negatively affected the body, chemotherapy negatively affected the mind, needed time to return from chemotherapy discomforts, and experiencing different chemotherapy regimens in different ways. Three sub-themes formed the second theme 'Experiencing chemotherapy positively' those subthemes experiencing a significant improvement of the disease, absence of common chemotherapy side effects, and emotional well-being during chemotherapy. The theme 'Living with chemotherapy' emerged from three sub-themes lifestyle modifications due to chemotherapy, perceiving and experiencing coping strategies positively, and supportive measures to deal with chemotherapy discomforts. Cancer patients experienced multiple physical and emotional disturbances during chemotherapy. It was clear from the findings that further interventions need to improve the emotional well-being of patients undergoing chemotherapy. Moreover, further studies are required to explore the different experiences of chemotherapy-related to the different chemotherapy regimens.

Keywords: *Chemotherapy, qualitative study, experiences, cancer patients*

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