

Taipei Medical University
Ph.D. Program in School of Nursing
Doctoral Dissertation

Advisor:
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Co-Advisor:
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Coping as a mediator among advanced cancer patients

Student's Name: Nurul Huda

December, 2021

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Abstract

Title of dissertation: Coping as mediators among advanced cancer patients

Institution: Ph.D. program in School of Nursing, Taipei Medical University

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Background: Diagnosing advanced cancer and the complex treatment it requires is stressful and affects all domains of a patient's life including mental aspects. Failure to acknowledge such emotional problems early on may greatly increase the severity of patients' cancer symptoms, and negatively impact their wellbeing, quality of life (QOL), and the oncological process itself. Coping is considered the intermediate process between stress onset and health outcomes in patients with advanced cancer. In patients with advanced cancer, the use of certain coping strategies is associated with outcomes including QOL, symptoms of depression, and anxiety. Therefore, coping is critical in determining whether a stressful event results in adaptive or maladaptive outcomes. However, the process of coping across distress trajectories among advanced cancer patients is dynamic. Hence, it is important to identify pathways by which advanced cancer patients create and maintain appropriate coping that ease emotional disorders associated with illnesses trajectories to better regain wellbeing.

Purpose: to test the mediating effects of coping on the relationships of psychological distress and stress with emotional symptoms (anxiety and depression) and QOL. We hypothesized that coping

fully or partially mediates the relationships of psychological distress and stress with anxiety, depression, and QOL in patients with advanced cancer in Indonesia.

Method: A cross-sectional and correlational research design was used to explore coping as mediating variables in the relationship between psychological distress, stress with anxiety, depression, and quality of life. The study was conducted at the outpatient oncology ward at Arifin Ahmad General Hospital, Pekanbaru, Riau Province, Indonesia. A non-probability sampling technique, purposive sampling, was used in the current study. A total of 440 participants who had met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were initially recruited for this study. Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were used to analyze the participants' demographics and clinical characteristics. The Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis H tests were used to determine the relationships between sociodemographic characteristics of the patients with advanced cancer with the outcomes of anxiety, depression, and the four QOL domains. Finally, The PROCESS Macro for SPSS version 3.3 was used to test the mediating effects of coping.

Results: Our results showed that Problem-Focused Coping (PFC) mediated the relationships of psychological distress and stress with depression, anxiety, and functional wellbeing. Additionally, PFC also mediated the relationship between stress and social wellbeing but it did not mediate that of psychological distress and social wellbeing. Emotional-Focused Coping (EFC) mediated relationships of psychological distress with physical wellbeing. In terms of stress, EFC could mediate the relationship of stress with both physical and emotional wellbeing.

Conclusion: This study highlighted the importance of PFC and EFC for advanced cancer patients. Thus, oncology nurses in clinical practice should identify the specific coping strategies that advanced cancer patients use to manage their stress and distress paying specific attention to cultural-specific conditions. This will help with the development of appropriate interventions that can be implemented to diminish depression and anxiety and promote higher QOL.