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Depression, anxiety, dyadic relationships, and mutual impact between Chinese cancer patients and family caregivers

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Background: Cancer and its treatment can result in psychological distress in both cancer patients (CPs) and their family caregivers (FCs). This psychological distress acts as a significant adverse factor in both CPs and FCs. The study purposes included: (i) to assess the anxiety and depression of CPs and their FCs, and examine the dyadic relationships of anxiety and depression between CPs and their FCs; (ii) to investigate factors that may modify these relationships.

Methods: Participants consisted of 641 dyads of CPs and FCs. Three types of variables were collected as potential modifying factors, including CP-related variables, FC-related variables, and family-related variables. Descriptive statistics, T-test, Pearson correlations, sub-group analysis were applied to conduct the data analysis.

Results: Nearly one-third of participants experienced anxiety and depression (the Chinese version of the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, C-HADS). CPs and FCs experienced a similar degree of C-HADS. Correlations (r) of C-HADS between CPs and FCs ranged from 0.25 to 0.32. Various factors influencing the anxiety and depression of dyads between CPs and their FCs were identified, including CP-related variables, FC-related variables, and family-related variables.

Conclusions: Study findings call attention to the anxiety and depression, as well as the related factors in dyads of CPs and FCs. The underlined essential components and focus of intervention, which will be developed to decrease psychological distress and improve quality of life in dyads of CPs and FCs, included such areas as individual characteristics of CPs and FCs, family relationship.

Biography

Qiuping Li, PhD and MD, Professor, Supervisor in master's degree. Her research interests comprise nursing education, digestive system diseases and cancer care. The major research contents mainly focus on the development and evaluation of supportive psychological intervention model for cancer patients and their family caregivers. She has accomplished 11 research projects. More than 90 articles were published by the first author or corresponding author, among which 25 were included in SCI journals. She has edited 16 textbooks and 5 monographs, and secured research funding from National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) as Principal Investigator.

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