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Counselling Cancer Patients: A Case Study of Perspectives of Professional Counsellors and Cancer Patients in Malaysia

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Abstract

Globally, cancer is renowned as the top leading cause of death. Given the severity of this illness, cancer patients often experience different problems ranging from psychological adjustment and physiological changes to a financial burden. Counselling cancer patients is one treatment option provided to provide support and constructive coping of uncertain outcomes. The present case study aimed to explore the counsellors' perspectives in counselling with cancer patients and cancer patients' views in counselling. This research study utilised a qualitative case study design to investigate the patients' and counsellors' perspectives in-depth. A professional counsellor who has experience in counselling cancer patients and cancer patients was recruited to learn about central importance issues in this study. Six themes have emerged from the research: (1) opinion about cancer, (2) opinion regarding counselling with cancer patients in Malaysia, (3) problems and concerns surround cancer patients, (4) difficulties and challenges working with cancer patients, (5) needs of the terminally ill, and (6) strategies and recommendations in counselling cancer patients. The finding provides professional counsellors with some indications in working together with cancer patients and terminally ill patients, which can be a complex and challenging process.

Keywords: Cancer Patient, Case Study, Counselling Cancer Patient, Malaysia, Perspective

Introduction

A terminal illness is a medical term used to describe a progressively worsening disease that typically results in death. In today's world, cancer is swiftly steered to the top of the list of causes of death. Cancer is one of the most referred to terminally illnesses, and the client is referred to as a terminally ill patient. According to the World Health Organization (2021), cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for 9.6 million deaths in 2018. Globally, deaths from cancer are estimated to continue rising, with an estimated 10 million deaths in 2020 and cancer is expected to fold up in Malaysia by 2040 after heart disease (Schliemann et al., 2020). There is no doubt that terminally ill patients are liable to death within a short period, and there is no adequate treatment that can cure the terminal illness.