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Comparison of the Effectiveness of Meaning Centered Therapy and Unit-Oriented Therapy on Resilience and Quality of Life in Leukemia Patients

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Extended Abstract

Aim

Outcomes in patients with leukemia vary widely, ranging from treatment-related mortality to relapse-free survival. Resistance to treatment is common, often manifesting as a relapse from remission, particularly in older patients. Treatment options range from purely palliative care to standard-of-care therapy and investigational therapies. Recent advancements in leukemia treatments, including novel therapies and targeted approaches, have contributed to a decrease in treatment-related mortality and a prolongation of overall survival. Across all leukemia types, measures of treatment success are increasingly patient-centric rather than focused solely on clinical outcomes, reflecting the recognition of the significant impact of leukemia on patients' quality of life. Due to recent changes in leukemia treatment, such as more intensive chemotherapy and increased use of stem cell transplants, there is an urgent need for a greater understanding of quality of life at different points in the patient journey (Pemberton-Whiteley et al., 2023). The available evidence shows that almost all cancer patients, including those with blood cancers, face a complex array of challenges that threaten their physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. Evaluating health-related quality of life (QOL) is an integral part of assessing treatment effectiveness and the burden of disease (Wang et al., 2020). Most people will encounter one or more potentially life-threatening traumatic experiences that can influence mental health and result in various conditions (Southwick et al., 2014). Resilience is the capacity and dynamic process of adaptively overcoming stress and adversity while maintaining normal psychological and physical functioning (Wu et al., 2013). It has been shown to help cancer patients and their families effectively cope with the multiple stresses triggered by the disease, inspire confidence, and withstand risks. Resilience has important positive implications in helping patients and their families accept the state of the disease and successfully navigate the crisis (Sun et al., 2024). Cancer patients face numerous physical, psychological, social, and spiritual concerns that need addressing. To date, few psychological interventions have directly addressed spirituality. Psychological cancer care has more often focused on psycho-educational, cognitive-behavioral, or support group interventions. Meaning-centered psychotherapy encompasses new therapeutic approaches designed to enhance meaning, spiritual well-being, and quality of life (Thomas et al., 2014).

Meaningful understanding and identification of life events, such as cancer, are fundamental to the quality and positive development of human life in unit-oriented therapy. This understanding has always played an important role in mental health and life satisfaction (Zadeh-Mohammadi, 2018). The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of meaning-centered therapy and unit-oriented therapy on resilience and quality of life in leukemia patients.

Methodology

The research method, in terms of purpose, was practical. Regarding data collection, the research method was semi-experimental with a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up design, including a control group. The statistical population of this study comprised all leukemia patients referred to Mahyar Charity in 2019 and 2020 in Tehran city. From this population, 60 patients were randomly selected and assigned to two experimental groups and one control group, with randomization and homogenization by age and gender. Participants completed the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) (Beck, Steer & Garbin, 1988), the Quality-of-Life Questionnaire-Core 30 (QLQ-C30) (Aaronson et al., 1993), and the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) (Connor & Davidson, 2003). for the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up assessments. The first experimental group underwent seven 90-minute sessions of meaning-centered therapy (Breitbart & Poppito, 2014), while the second experimental group underwent seven 90-minute sessions of unit-oriented therapy (Zadeh Mohammadi, 2018). Data were analyzed using analysis of variance with repeated measures, utilizing SPSS-24 software.

Findings

The results of the present study showed a significant difference between the effectiveness of unit-oriented therapy and meaning-centered therapy on the component of emotional quality of life ($P=0.001$). However, there was no significant difference between the effectiveness of unit-oriented therapy and meaning-centered therapy on resilience ($P=0.635$).

Conclusion

Meaning-centered psychotherapy is existential in nature and posits that the creation of meaning is a primary force of human motivation. This psychotherapy suggests that people desire to find meaning in their existence and have the ability to find meaning even during times of great suffering. Furthermore, finding meaning can help decrease suffering and potentially lead to psychological well-being in the future (Thomas et al., 2014).

In unit-oriented therapy, when cancer patients view death as a transformation and feel their immortality and safety in approaching a higher being, it reduces their anxiety and worry. This perspective increases their tolerance against the tension and pain associated with the disease (Zadeh Mohammadi, 2015).

Keywords: Cancer, Meaning Centered Therapy, Quality of Life, Resilience, Unit-Oriented Therapy.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations in the present research were as follows: Every patient had the right to choose whether to participate in the research, and they could withdraw from the study at any stage without being deprived of healthcare services. Additionally, patients were assured that their personal information would remain confidential, and any unnecessary or potentially harmful physical or psychological questioning or procedures would be avoided, with compensation provided for any potential harm.

Furthermore, it was explained that if the patient wished, they would be informed about the implementation of the research plan or any changes to it. Patients were also informed that they would not receive any financial compensation for participating in the research. The importance of honesty and integrity in data analysis and the provision of research results to the patient, if desired, was emphasized. Lastly, the procedure for lodging complaints with the appropriate authorities in case of any problems was clearly explained to the patients.

Acknowledgments

This research received no financial support. Appreciation is extended to all those who assisted in conducting this research.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in the present research.

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Cite this article: Bajelan, M., Zadeh Mohammadi, A., & Ghorban Jahromi, R. (2024). Comparison of the Effectiveness of Meaning Centered Therapy and Unit-Oriented Therapy on Resilience and Quality of Life in Leukemia Patients. *Journal of Applied Psychological Research*, 15(1), 255-275. doi: 10.22059/japr.2024.336331.644151.



Publisher: University of Tehran Press

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22059/japr.2024.336331.644151>