

Psychological Responses in Cancer Patients: Behavioural and Social Aspects

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Commentary

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DESCRIPTION

Psycho-oncology examines psychological responses to cancer experiences, the behavioural aspects of coping with cancer, as well as changes in health behaviour, including preventive medicine, and social aspects of cancer diagnosis and treatment, such as social support and communication with medical professionals and loved ones. In addition, over the past 20 years, research on the impact of psychosocial variables on processes connected to biological disease has proliferated. A biopsychosocial perspective is widely used in studies to explain how biological, psychological, and social aspects of living with cancer interact. In terms of providing care for the entire patient, the integration of psycho-oncology into standard oncologic treatment constitutes a significant advancement.

Cancer diagnosis and treatment are known to have a major impact on psychological wellbeing. When compared to demographic norms, the majority of people with cancer experience higher rates of psychological discomfort. Concerns about one's mood and level of worry are frequent psychological responses to cancer. Increased rates of sadness and anxiety following a cancer diagnosis are frequently associated to uncertainty about mortality, enduring difficult therapies, and worries about functional hindrance, negative body image, or other self-concept-related misery. Understanding people's psychological responses to cancer is crucial to promoting their general wellbeing and enhancing their quality of life both during and after treatment.

Treatments for psychotherapy that are geared toward the experience of living with cancer include these topics. Even though the majority of cancer patients do not show clinically significant anxiety or depressive symptoms, their prevalence following cancer diagnosis is significantly greater than population averages.

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The field of psycho-oncology is primarily interested in the psychological and behavioural reactions of individuals to cancer diagnosis and treatment in an effort to manage the significant stress and health hazard. These actions make up what is known as a person's coping response to a health concern. The various domains that are affected by cancer treatment make cognitive adaptation to cancer particularly difficult. Approach-oriented coping and avoidance-oriented coping are two general forms of coping behaviour.

Approach coping refers to the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional aspects of adjusting to cancer, such as expressing emotions, participating actively in one's own care, being active, and talking with loved ones about challenges.

According to research, approach-oriented coping promotes more beneficial changes and psychological well-being than avoidance-oriented coping.

An individual's maladaptive attempt to lessen the psychological harm caused by a stressful situation is known as avoidance coping. People are prevented from effectively managing the worries that are causing psychological anguish by passive behaviours, emotional suppression, and avoidance of conversation about cancer. Numerous psychological interventions aim to improve patients' capacity for using more adaptive coping behaviours and cognitions while reducing maladaptive coping.

Finding benefits from receiving a cancer diagnosis is a cognitive process in which people recognise the advantages it has brought them. It serves as an illustration of a coping technique that is approach- or positively-oriented. An individual may claim, for instance, that receiving a cancer diagnosis caused them to reflect on what is truly important in life and thereby improved their quality of life.