
Enhancing Quality of Life in Oncology Patients: A Qualitative Exploration of Nursing Interventions and Patient Experiences

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted in an outpatient oncology setting in the Philippines to explore how nursing interventions influence the quality of life of oncology patients from the perspectives of both patients and nurses. The study revealed that nursing care plays a critical role beyond clinical treatment, shaping patients' lived experiences through emotional support, communication, and holistic care. Patients reported improved comfort, coping ability, and overall well-being when nurses demonstrated compassionate presence and provided clear, supportive communication. Furthermore, the findings highlighted that quality of life is not defined solely by physical health but also by how care is experienced throughout the treatment process. At the same time, nurses reported experiencing emotional and workload-related challenges yet demonstrated resilience by finding meaning and fulfillment in their roles. Overall, the study underscores the importance of patient-centered, holistic, and relational approaches in oncology nursing to enhance quality of life and support patients and healthcare providers alike.

Keywords: *Quality of life, oncology patients, nursing interventions, phenomenological study, patient experiences*

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a complex condition that affects not only physical health but also the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of patients. As treatment advances improve survival rates, increasing attention has been given to quality of life, a multidimensional concept encompassing overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2015). In oncology care, nursing interventions play a vital role beyond symptom management by providing emotional support, therapeutic communication, and holistic care that shape patients' experiences of illness (Ferrell et al., 2017). However, much of the existing literature remains focused on clinical outcomes, with limited attention to the lived experiences of patients and nurses, particularly in outpatient settings and within the Philippine context. This study therefore aims to explore how nursing interventions influence the quality of life of oncology patients from the perspectives of both patients and nurses, to inform more patient-centered and holistic approaches to care.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore how nursing interventions influence the quality of life of oncology patients from the perspectives of both patients and nurses. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of oncology patients regarding nursing interventions in relation to their quality of life?
2. Which nursing interventions are perceived as most meaningful by patients, and why?
3. How do nurses perceive their role in enhancing the quality of life of oncology patients?
4. What emotional and psychosocial impacts of nursing care are described by patients and nurses in the oncology setting?

Scope and Delimitations

This study explored the lived experiences of oncology patients and nurses regarding nursing interventions that influence patient quality of life in an outpatient oncology setting. Participants included clinically stable oncology patients and oncology nurses with at least one year of direct care experience. Conducted in a tertiary hospital in Marikina City, the study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach using semi-structured interviews. The findings provide in-depth insights into participant experiences and are not intended for generalization.

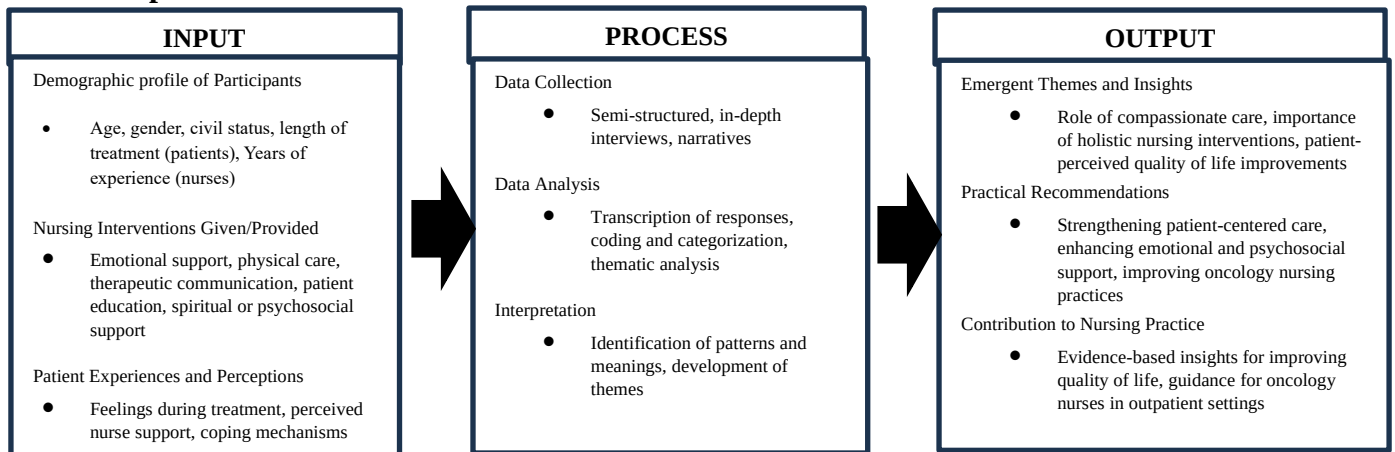
Review of Related Literature

Nursing interventions are widely recognized as essential in improving the quality of life of oncology patients, extending beyond symptom management to include emotional support, education, and therapeutic communication that enhance coping, reduce anxiety, and improve well-being (Ferrell et al., 2017; Miaskowski et al., 2017; McCabe, 2004). Holistic, patient-centered approaches also address patients' physical, emotional, and spiritual needs (Kolcaba, 2003; Watson, 2008). In the Philippine context, empathy and family involvement further shape patient care experiences (Caballero & Estillore, 2023). However, there remains limited research on the lived experiences of both patients and nurses, highlighting the need for further qualitative studies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Watson's Theory of Human Caring and Kolcaba's Comfort Theory to examine how nursing interventions influence the quality of life of oncology patients. These frameworks highlight compassionate, holistic care and patient comfort as key factors shaping patients' experiences of care and overall well-being.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore how nursing interventions influence the quality of life of oncology patients from the perspectives of both patients and nurses. It focused on capturing lived experiences through in-depth inquiry and thematic interpretation.

Research Design

A phenomenological research design was used to examine participants' lived experiences, enabling an in-depth understanding of how nursing care is perceived and experienced in the outpatient oncology setting. This approach was appropriate for uncovering the meanings individuals assign to their experiences.

Research Steps

The research process involved participant selection, data collection through interviews, transcription of responses, and systematic thematic analysis. Coding and theme development were conducted iteratively to ensure that findings remained grounded in participant narratives.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

A total of 22 participants, consisting of 11 oncology patients and 11 oncology nurses, were selected through purposive sampling from a tertiary hospital in Marikina City. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences freely.

Data Analysis Methods

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework, employing an inductive approach to identify patterns, subthemes, and overarching themes. This method enabled the systematic organization and interpretation of qualitative data.

Research Hypothesis and Validation

As a qualitative study, no formal hypothesis was tested; instead, the research aimed to explore and understand experiences. Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail to validate the consistency and credibility of the findings.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study was limited to a single outpatient oncology setting with a relatively small sample size, which may affect generalizability. Ethical standards were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and adherence to institutional ethical guidelines.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in a limited capacity for grammar checking, sentence refinement, and improving the clarity and organization of the manuscript. All data collection, analysis, interpretation, and conclusions were conducted solely by the researcher. AI served only as a writing aid and did not contribute to any research processes or findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**SOP 1. How do oncology patients experience nursing interventions in relation to their quality of life?**

Qualitative findings revealed that nursing interventions significantly shaped the quality of life of oncology patients during treatment. Patients valued compassionate, empathetic nurses who provided emotional support and reassurance, helping them feel more comfortable, secure, and less anxious. They also found care most meaningful when it was holistic and individualized, addressing not only physical symptoms but also emotional and personal needs, which enhanced their overall well-being.

SOP 2. Which nursing interventions are perceived as most meaningful, and why?

Findings showed that communication and holistic care were highly valued nursing interventions. Therapeutic communication, including clear explanations, active listening, and consistent interaction, helped patients understand their condition, reduce uncertainty, and feel more in control. Emotional and psychosocial support was also essential, as reassurance and encouragement helped patients cope better with fear and distress during treatment.

SOP 3. How do nurses perceive their role in enhancing the quality of life of oncology patients?

Nurses perceived their role as extending beyond clinical tasks to include emotional and holistic care. They emphasized patient-centered care through building relationships, individualizing interventions, and using communication and empathy as essential components of effective nursing practice.

SOP 4. What emotional and psychosocial impacts of nursing care are described by patients and nurses?

Findings highlighted both positive patient outcomes and challenges for nurses. Patients reported improved emotional well-being, stronger coping ability, and a more positive outlook when supported by effective nursing care. Nurses experienced emotional strain and workload challenges but remained resilient, finding meaning and fulfillment in their roles. Overall, the results show that nursing care influences quality of life not only through clinical interventions but also through the way patients experience care.

SUMMARY

The findings show that nursing interventions significantly influence the quality of life of oncology patients through not only clinical care but also emotional, psychological, and relational support. Compassionate, clear, and holistic nursing care improved coping, reduced anxiety, and enhanced well-being. Nurses also play a broader role beyond technical tasks, providing empathetic, patient-centered care while facing emotional and workload challenges. Despite this, they remain resilient and find meaning in their work. Overall, the study emphasizes that oncology patients' quality of life is strongly shaped by holistic, patient-centered nursing care.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that nursing interventions play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life of oncology patients, extending beyond clinical care to include emotional, psychosocial, and relational support. Compassionate presence, effective communication, and holistic care were identified as central elements that improve patients' coping ability, emotional well-being, and overall experience of illness. At the same time, nurses navigate emotional and workload-related challenges yet demonstrate resilience by finding meaning in their practice. These findings affirm that quality of life in oncology is shaped not only by treatment outcomes, but by how care is experienced, highlighting the need for patient-centered and holistic approaches in nursing practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, oncology nursing practice should strengthen patient-centered, holistic care by integrating emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual support with clinical interventions. Healthcare institutions should also support nurse well-being through workload management and mental health resources. Furthermore, nursing education should emphasize therapeutic communication and holistic care, while future studies may explore similar experiences in other oncology settings.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools were used to improve the grammar and structure of this article. However, the data collection, analysis, and interpretation were done entirely by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the content and overall work.

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