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The Role of Caregiver in Patients of Nasopharyngeal Cancer (NFC) During Treatment

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Abstract

Nasopharyngeal cancer patients with stage I – IV will cause painful symptoms such as signs of swelling due to the growth of abnormal tissue in the nasopharynx. Symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer can interfere with daily activities, the fulfillment of daily needs, and the need for rest. The dependence of nasopharyngeal cancer patients with stage I – IV is very minimal to carry out daily activities both physically, psychologically, socially, and in control of disease or symptoms related to treatment and care. This study aims to explore in-depth the meaning of the experience of a partner with nasopharyngeal cancer as a caregiver at home. This research is a descriptive phenomenological study. Data was collected by depth interviews and field notes. The participants in this study were 10 people who were selected by the purposive sampling technique. The data obtained were analyzed using the Colaizzi approach. The results of the research analysis found 3 themes, namely helping patients in meeting basic needs, impact on caregivers, and wisdom for caregivers. In general, caregivers feel neglected, lack information on how to care for their partner with nasopharyngeal cancer and the use of health care facilities. Based on the results of the study, it is suggested that couples should be more informed about the disease of partners who have nasopharyngeal cancer in the form of health education.

Keywords: Spouse; nasopharyngeal cancer; caregiver;

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Introduction

Nasopharyngeal cancer patients with stage I – IV will cause painful symptoms such as signs of swelling due to the growth of abnormal tissue in the nasopharynx. Perceived symptoms of nasal dysfunction, aural dysfunction, and headache are not specific in nasopharyngeal cancer patients but should be a warning sign in endemic areas. Symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer can interfere with daily activities, meeting daily needs, and the need for rest (Fles et al. 2010).

The dependence of nasopharyngeal cancer patients with stage I – IV is very minimal to carry out daily activities both physically, psychologically, socially, and in control of disease or symptoms related to treatment and care. Patients with nasopharyngeal cancer experience impaired physical, functional well-being, emotional well-being, social functioning, and occupational well-being. The above factors are things that need to be considered in nasopharyngeal cancer patients (Wu et al. 2007).

Head and neck cancer patients with stage I – IV, especially nasopharyngeal cancer patients mostly undergo radiotherapy as outpatients. The partner accompanies the patient as long as the patient needs assistance to meet the needs of the patient who is the patient's caregiver. Patients who already have a partner such as a husband and a wife, of them will be the caregiver-patient. The partner will assist the patient is undergoing treatment and care such as taking the patient to undergo radiotherapy and the partner as a caregiver who can assist routine care at home including assisting the patient in meeting daily needs, emotional support, assisting in the management of signs and symptoms that will appear and help manage daily household finances (Sae-Sia and Kitrungrote 2008).

Oral cancer patients with stage I – IV need care support depending on their partner to carry out daily care during the postoperative period and undergo radiotherapy. The caregiver has a relationship with the patient's illness. Caregivers have a very high burden on the patient's condition, caregivers also need support from other families to help patients in terms of finances to ease the caregiver in helping patients in treatment and daily care (Chen et al. 2009).

Caregivers have many responsibilities to patients, including the fulfillment of food intake to control unhealthy foods such as foods high in fat and sugar. Caregivers also monitor the diet and food ingredients of nasopharyngeal cancer patients, which is very helpful in the process of treating the patient's disease. For this reason, caregivers are required to pay attention to all aspects that can reduce pain from the patient's illness, such as controlling diet and food ingredients that will be consumed by the patient (Baskin et al. 2013).

research results et al (2009) caregiver for oral cancer patients, where the family in question is one of the family members such as husband and wife, neighbors, children, and relatives. Significant factors related to family support as caregivers are social support, physical abilities and daily activities of patients, systems and health information needed by patients, and psychological needs of patients.

The results of the research by Kitrungrote et al (2008), couples who become caregivers for couples who need care, focus on commitment as caregivers partners, focus on actions given by caregivers, and experiences of partners as caregivers during radiotherapy in patients with advanced neck and head cancer.

Nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC) is the most malignant disease. The incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer in 2000 was about 65,000 cases nasopharyngeal cancer and 38,000 deaths worldwide (Fles et al. 2010). The incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer in European countries and the United States the incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer is inversely proportional to 1 to 2 people per 100,000 people. The incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer in Southeast Asia, especially in South China, the incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer can be up to 20 to 30 people per 100,000 people (OuYang et al. 2013).

The incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer is seen in South East Asia, including Singapore as many as 15 people per 100,000 people, Malaysia as many as 9 people per 100,000 people, and the Philippines as many as 6 people per 100,000 people. African countries including Kenya are 5 people per 100,000 people, the incidence in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia are 5 people per 100,000 people (Adham et al. 2012).

Nasopharyngeal cancer in Indonesia has a relatively high incidence, at least 5.7 men and 1.9 women per 100,000 people compared to a worldwide incidence of 1.9 among men and 0.8 among women (Fles et al. 2010).

The incidence of nasopharyngeal cancer at the Haji Adam Malik Provincial General Hospital (RSUP HAM) for the period December 2006 to September 2007 of 24 patients with Nasopharyngeal Cancer found 41.1% stage III, stage IV 29.1%, and only 4.2% and 25 % with stages I and II and nasopharyngeal cancer each year has increased (Zahara, Nurchayati, and Woferst 2018).

Research Method

This research method uses qualitative research with descriptive phenomenology design. The number of participants in this study were as many as 16 participants, where as participants in this study were partners of head and neck cancer patients. Sampling of this research used purposive sampling technique.

The process of collecting data is through in-depth interviews with a time of 60-90 minutes with open-ended questions. Data obtained from indept-interviews were made in the form of narratives and then analyzed using content analysis.

Result

The results of the study revealed 3 themes of the experience of couples with nasopharyngeal cancer, namely: 1) assisting patients in meeting basic needs, 2) impact on caregivers, and 3) wisdom for caregivers.

Helping patients in meeting their basic needs

Nasopharyngeal cancer patients have problems with excessive activities due to a lump in the neck so almost all the basic needs of nasopharyngeal cancer patients must be assisted by caregivers. The categories of the themes mentioned above include 1) physiological needs, and 2) dependence of nasopharyngeal cancer patients.

The impact on caregivers

Nasopharyngeal cancer patients have a very difficult task because almost all aspects of the needs of nasopharyngeal cancer patients depend on the help of the caregiver. The many tasks of caregivers who for years have cared for nasopharyngeal cancer patients have an impact on caregivers, namely: 1) physical impact, 2) psychological impact and 3) social impact

Lessons for caregivers

In carrying out their roles, caregivers reveal that they have learned lessons from what has happened. The lessons for caregivers are divided into 1 category, namely: learning for couples with nasopharyngeal cancer.

Discussion

Assisting patients in meeting basic needs

The dependence of nasopharyngeal cancer patients with stage I – IV is very minimal to carry out daily activities both physically, psychologically, socially, and controlling disease or symptoms related to treatment and care. Patients with nasopharyngeal cancer experience impaired physical, functional well-being, emotional well-being, social functioning, and occupational well-being. The above factors are things that need to be considered in nasopharyngeal cancer patients (Wu et al. 2007).

The results of this study are in line with research by Baskin et al (2013), one of the tasks and roles of partners who become caregivers is to monitor the diet and food ingredients of nasopharyngeal cancer patients, which is very helpful in the process of treating the patient's disease. For this reason, caregivers are required to pay attention to all aspects that can reduce pain from the patient's illness, such as controlling diet and food ingredients that will be consumed by the patient.

The results of Silaen's research (2018), that there is a need for counseling to patients and caregivers to reduce anxiety for patients during treatment and for caregivers as caregivers patients undergoing treatment.

The impact on caregivers

Nasopharyngeal cancer patients have a very difficult task because almost all aspects of the lives of nasopharyngeal cancer patients depend on the help of the caregiver. The many tasks of caregivers who have spent many years caring for nasopharyngeal cancer patients have a great impact on caregivers. The results obtained by researchers; the majority of caregivers complain of complaints while accompanying nasopharyngeal cancer patients. The complaints felt by caregivers include physical impacts, psychological impacts, and social impacts.

The results of this study are in line with research by Pornchai., et al (2006), most caregivers of patients who need assistance in care and treatment are families such as children, wives, and husbands of patients. During treatment and assisting during treatment, caregivers suffer from problems due to patient care, including physical problems such as fatigue, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, pain, and weakness.

Lessons for caregivers

The role of the partner in assisting the patient as a caregiver will determine the couple's recovery rate and provide continuous care, where the caregiver gains wisdom from what has been experienced by her partner. The majority of participants in this study revealed that they have learned a lot from previous experiences and have added to my knowledge about this disease, and providing treatments that can be given to patients and which cannot be given to patients.

The results of Houldin's research (2007), the experience of caregivers in newly diagnosed patients with advanced colorectal cancer, gain new wisdom and knowledge for their partners who have been diagnosed with advanced colorectal cancer in the form of prevention and care for patients during treatment and care.

Conclusion

Helping patients in meeting basic needs

Researchers found 1 theme, where theme helps in meeting the basic needs of nasopharyngeal cancer patients consisting of 2 categories and 4 sub-categories.

Impact on caregivers

Researchers found 1 theme, where the theme of the impact on caregivers while caring for nasopharyngeal cancer patients consists of 1 category and 3 sub-categories.

Wisdom for caregivers

Researchers found 1 theme, where the theme of wisdom for caregivers consists of 1 category and 1 sub-category

Based on the results of the study, some suggestions were given to the hospital, nursing education, and nursing research. Holistic assessment is needed not only for nasopharyngeal cancer patients, but caregivers also need to be intervened as companions during treatment at home. Nurses must provide teaching materials and health education on how to properly treat nasopharyngeal cancer at home. Long-term care and treatment planning is centered on the family, especially the couple so that it is not only centered on nasopharyngeal cancer patients.

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