

## **The effect of peer support in patients with breast cancer during the stage of rehabilitation in China**

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**BACKGROUND:** Breast cancer in rehabilitation is generally behind chemotherapy, radiotherapy and surgery, then the patients would receive following-up, observation and treatment. Experienced psychological and physiological impact from preliminary diagnosis, surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, patients during the stage of rehabilitation are easy to be depressive due to defects of quality of life and psychological cognition. Facing society returning, peer support from inter-patients could improve esteem, control-self and social participation for patients with breast cancer during the stage of rehabilitation. In China, durative nursing model focused on medical staff is unreachable, while the care model mainly consist of peer support is more accessible. The aim of the study is to discuss the intervention measures of peer support for patients with breast cancer during the stage of rehabilitation to reduce their depression degree and increase their quality of life.

**HYPOTHESIS:** This study could confirm the contents of peer support measures from inter-patients which may improve quality of life while reduce depression level for patients with breast cancer during rehabilitation period.

**METHODS:** Semi-structured interview and literature review were applied to establish peer support programme for patients. Afterwards, 100 patients with breast cancer during rehabilitation period were selected randomly to compose observation group (n=50) and control group (n=50). Routine health support and peer support were given to observation group, while only routine health support was given to control group both via telephone, social network platform, e-mail and video. Ultimately, Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-Breast (FACT-B) was used to evaluated their quality of life (QOL), then the self rating depression scale (SDS) was used to evaluated their depression level.

**RESULTS:** According to rehabilitation effects, temperamental characteristics, role cognition and demand degree for peer support of patients with breast cancer in rehabilitation, peer support programme mainly include establishment of peer support relationship, opportunity providing for peer support, contents and approaches of peer support, professional property of peer support. Finally, T test and Anova were used to analyze database in observation and control group. The result show no difference with basic information in two groups,  $P > 0.05$ . The score of quality of life in observation group was higher than that in control group, and depression score in observation group was lower than that in control group; the differences was statistically significant,  $P < 0.01$ . Peer support can significantly improve quality of life while reduce depression level for patients with breast cancer during rehabilitation stage. It is worthy to adopt

this measure for patients with breast cancer during the stage of rehabilitation improving their psychological health.