The Relationship between Spiritual Health and Public Health Aspects among Patients with Breast Cancer

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**Abstract**

**Background and Objective:** Spiritual well-being is one of the fundamental concepts in chronic diseases and is considered an important approach to improve public health among individuals. Given the importance of spiritual well-being and its role in the promotion of mental health, the present study was conducted with the aim of evaluating spiritual well-being and mental health in patients with breast cancer who visited a center for cancer control at the University of Medical Sciences.

**Method:** This cross-sectional study was conducted on 122 patients with breast cancer in 2015. The data were collected through self-administered 20-item Paloutzian & Ellison’s Spiritual Well-Being Scale and a 28-item questionnaire of mental health after determining their validity and reliability. The collected data were then analyzed using ANOVA and Pearson correlation and linear regression.

**Results:** The results show that most patients had moderate spiritual health (37.8%), and most of them suffered mild mental health problems. (50 percent). Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between mental health and demographic characteristics (Marital status, education, income, physical activity). There was also a significant relationship between mental health and spiritual health.

**Conclusion:** According to the findings, to prevent mental suffering among patients with breast cancer, promoting spiritual health of patients should be regarded as one of the priorities of health care professionals.


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**Summary**

**Background and Objectives:** Breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer among women around the world (1). This disease changes the person's life path, creating many physical, psychological, social, economic, and family problems (2).

Given the threatening nature of cancer, the diagnosis of this disease significantly increases the spiritual needs of patients (3). In the case of the experiences of living with cancer, it has been found that the spiritual health is an important aspect of a healthy life (4). Considering the importance of spiritual health and its role in improving general health, this study aimed to evaluate spiritual health in patients with breast cancer.

**Method:** This study was a descriptive-analytic study. The population consisted of all patients who referred to a center of cancer control. Using available sampling methods, within three months 122 patients were selected as the participants of the study.

The research instruments included demographic characteristics questionnaire and Ellison and Paloutzian’s Spiritual Health and General Health...
The General Health Questionnaire included 28 questions and four sub-tests. The validity of Spiritual Health Questionnaire (Ellison and Paloutzian’s Standard Spiritual Health Questionnaire) and General Health Questionnaire were determined using other articles. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS16 and Pearson test, ANOVA, and linear regression test.

**Results:** The mean age of these patients was 51.08 years old. Their age range was 32 to 65 years old. In terms of education level, most patients were under diploma. Most of participants were married (n= 89). However, 35 patients reported that they had no activity and 45 people reported that they had physical activity less than 2.5 hours per week. The results of ANOVA showed that there was a significant relationship between education, physical activity, and income level and general health of patients. Moreover, the results of independent t-analysis showed there was a significant relationship between marital status and general health (p= 0.022). The mean of spiritual health and general health was 92.70 and 29.16, respectively. These findings indicated that the mean of patients’ spiritual health was over the mean value and their general health was less than mean value.

Regression analysis demonstrated that the health may predict 67% of variance in patient's general health. However, the (Stepwise) regression final model showed that the predictive power of model may increase up to 73% by adding income and education level ($R^2=0.73$, F=46.06, p<0.001).

**Conclusion:** As findings and correlation test results indicate there was a significant relationship between general health and spiritual health of patients (p= 0.009). In other words, it can be concluded that the higher the spiritual health of patients, the less psychological damage and symptoms. This is consistent with findings of Rippentrop et al (5), Strawbridge (6), and Muria-Almadia et al (7); they showed that the spirituality is associated with health, good feelings, and improved communication.

Based on linear regression analysis, physical health, level of income, and education level may predict 73 percent of variance in general health; physical health ($\beta= 0.638$) being the strongest predictor of variance in patients’ general health. Dastgheib and colleagues showed that the spiritual health may predict 70 percent of variance in people's general health (8).

**References**


