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END OF LIFE EXPERIENCES OF PATIENTS WITH CANCER

The quality of life in patients with cancer at their end stage is highly affected by various physical and psychological factors that lead them into pathetic experiences. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to explore the end of life experiences of patients with cancer. In this phenomenological study, 16 patients with cancer at their end stage of life were purposely recruited from the cancer unit, Provincial General Hospital, Badulla. Semi structured individual in-depth interviews were conducted to collect data.

Three major themes namely 'this is not me', 'totally dependent' and 'journey of dying' were derived from thematic analysis. The findings under the theme 'this is not me' disclosed that patients at their end stage feel themselves as an entirely different person both physically and mentally. Their inability to lead their routine life and fulfill the financial needs make them feel totally dependent on someone else. As a result, with the unaccomplished dreams and faith on miracles, they gradually get prepared to face their ultimate end and have the desire to meet a peaceful death.

It was concluded that, the patients with cancer at their end stage are leading a miserable life due to the sudden and unexpected overturns in their routine lifestyle. Therefore, it is highly recommended that, the health care system should be enriched with new and improved strategies in order to enhance the quality of life in patients with cancer at their end stage.

Key words: cancer, patients, experiences, end stage

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