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PP 12 - Exploration of the Experiences of Family Care Givers towards End of Life Care of the Patients with Cancer

Senarath H.L.C.D., Nilmini S.K.R.D., Gammuduwatta A.V.,
Kalpani K.N., Ranaweera R.A.N.D.[#], De Silva B.S.S.

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka

[#]Corresponding author: disalaranaweera1992@gmail.com

Background: Cancer is an uncontrolled growth of cells in the body. It gradually leads to major health problems, that makes the person dependant on another. It affect both patients and their families adversely especially in the stage of their end of life.

Objectives: To explore family care givers experiences towards the end of life care of the patients with cancer who have registered in palliative care unit of the Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya.

Methodology: Fifteen care givers were selected purposively those who have registered and followed up by the Palliative care unit of Teaching Hospital Karapitiya. These family care givers were interviewed at their home residences those who resided in the Galle urban area, those who aged between 35 to 50 years. This was conducted as a phenominological study. Data was collected by interviews with semi structured questionnaire guide from February to April 2018. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Ethical approval was obtained from the ethics review committee of Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna.

Results and conclusions: Five themes emerged from the data, they were, horrible experiences, experiences beyond the reality (religious beliefs and traditional healing methods), social life changes, loss of strength and heart touching feelings. Deadly feeling of cancer and body image changes were sub categories of the theme horrible experince. Belief on religious concepts and traditional healing methods were sub categories of the theme of beyond the reality. Under the theme of social life changes, lack of family support and reduction of family income were identified sub categories. Moreover feeling tired and sleep pattern changes were the sub-categories emerged under the theme of loss of strength. Ultimately under the theme of heart touching feelings, fear of loosing loved ones and excitement of being a care giver were identified as sub-categories. According to the findings, care givers of cancer patients presented with adverse negative experiences such as horrible experiences, social life changes, loss of strength, experiences beyond the reality and heart touching feelings that has occured due to the end of life care provided by the family care givers by themselves, which lead to affect the life of the care givers adversely. Hence it is recommended to prepare them with pre educational programes before take them as the care givers.

Keywords: End of life care, family care givers, experinces, cancer