

The Relationship Between Coping and Quality of Life in Breast Cancer Patients

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Abstract

Introduction: Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women and continues to increase globally, including in Indonesia. Patients undergoing chemotherapy often experience physical and psychological distress that may affect their quality of life. Coping mechanisms play an important role in helping patients adapt to these challenges, making it necessary to examine their relationship with quality of life in breast cancer patients.

Objective: The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients at RSUD Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Lampung Province in 2024.

Method: This research method uses a cross sectional design using the chi square sampling technique, totaling 82 respondents. This research instrument uses a questionnaire sheet on coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients

Result: The research results showed that of the 82 respondents, 56 respondents (68.3%) had adaptive coping mechanisms and 26 respondents (31.7%) had maladaptive coping mechanisms. Meanwhile, of the 82 respondents who had a good quality of life, 55 respondents (67.1%), and 27 respondents (32.9%) had a poor quality of life.

Conclusion: Based on the results of statistical tests, a p-value of 0.025 ($p\text{-value} \leq 0.005$) was obtained, which means there is a relationship between coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients at RSUD Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Lampung Province. It is hoped that the family will motivate and provide family support to the patient in healing and improving the patient's quality of life.

Keywords: breast cancer, coping mechanisms, quality of life

Introduction

Cancer is a disease that appears suddenly, but takes a long time to ravage the human body. It is one of the leading causes of death worldwide and is the most feared. The phenomenon of cancer is currently experiencing a significant increase, and every year in various parts of the world, the number of cancer sufferers increases. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), according to World Cancer Research International (2022), the most common cancer worldwide was 19,976,499 cases. In 2022, non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) decreased to 18,741,966. The most common cancer cases affected the trachea, bronchi, and lungs, with 2,480,675 cases in 2022, while the chest was 2,296,840 cases. The colorectum ranked third with 1,926,425 cases. (World Cancer Research Fund International, 2022).

The number of cancer cases in several countries with the largest number of cancer cases in the world is in China with 4.5 million cases. Second place is held by the United States with 2.2 million cases. India is in third place with 1.3 million cases. Indonesia itself is in 11th place with a total of 396,914 cases (WHO, 2023). According to Malau et al. (2023) the incidence of breast cancer is expected to increase worldwide, while the results of breast cancer data with the highest percentage, namely 43.3%, and the percentage of deaths due to breast cancer is 12.9%. The prevalence of breast cancer is 1,677,000 cases where cancer is most often suffered by women, there are 794,000 cases occurring in developing countries and causing 324,000 deaths due to breast cancer. Breast cancer is increasing with data recorded in Indonesia reaching 42.1 people per 100,000 population. Deaths due to breast cancer are recorded at an average of 17 people per 100,000 population. Treatment options for breast cancer include surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and hormonal therapy. Chemotherapy is one of the therapies available for breast cancer patients. The positive effects of chemotherapy include improved patient comfort due to improvements in previously experienced physical symptoms, while negative effects include hair loss, nausea and vomiting, dry mouth and mouth ulcers, diarrhea, pancytopenia, allergies/hypersensitivity, nerve and muscle problems, skin problems, and fatigue. (Malau, 2023).

Nurses play a crucial role in supporting breast cancer patients' coping mechanisms. They not only provide physical care but also accompany patients in navigating the emotional and psychological challenges arising from a cancer diagnosis and treatment. The interpersonal relationships fostered by nurses can enhance patients' adaptive coping skills, help them adapt to changes, reduce anxiety, and increase self-acceptance.

Research shows that good coping mechanisms are closely associated with higher self-acceptance in breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. Nurses can play a role in identifying patients' educational needs, providing spiritual support, and involving families in the care process to improve patients' quality of life. Furthermore, nurses also play a role in providing comprehensive health education, helping patients understand their condition, and encouraging the use of adaptive coping mechanisms. Thus, nurses can help patients manage stress, improve quality of life, and facilitate the healing process.

Previous research by Malau (2023) employed a cross-sectional design using the Spearman rank sampling technique. This research instrument used a questionnaire assessing coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients. The study results showed that 95.2% had adaptive coping mechanisms and 24.8% had maladaptive coping mechanisms. 83.3% had a good quality of life, while 16.7% had a poor quality. Furthermore, another study by Karokaro (2021) showed changes in coping mechanisms with a p-value of 0.001 ($\alpha > 0.05$).

This study demonstrated an increase in coping mechanisms in breast cancer patients who followed standard procedures.

Based on medical records at Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Regional Hospital in Bandar Lampung from September to November 2024, data were collected on 154 breast cancer cases. Interviews revealed that most experienced denial about their breast cancer diagnosis and a lack of enthusiasm for daily activities. However, over time, they accepted their condition and went about their daily lives with normal, happy behavior.

Objective

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients at RSUD Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Lampung Province in 2024.

Method

This study employed a quantitative analytical design with a cross-sectional approach to determine the relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life among breast cancer patients. The research was conducted at Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Regional General Hospital, Lampung Province, from September to November 2024. The study population comprised 154 breast cancer patients undergoing treatment, and a total of 82 respondents were selected using a non-probability sampling technique based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria included patients diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoing chemotherapy, aged 18 years or older, able to communicate effectively, and willing to participate in the study, while patients in critical condition or with cognitive impairments were excluded. Data were collected using structured questionnaires measuring coping mechanisms and quality of life, which were administered through direct interviews after obtaining informed consent. Data analysis was performed using statistical software, including univariate analysis to describe respondent characteristics and bivariate analysis using the Chi-square test to assess the relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$ and odds ratios calculated to determine the strength of the association. Ethical principles were applied throughout the study by ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

Result

Table 1. Relationship between Coping Mechanisms and Quality of Life in Breast Cancer Patients

Coping Mechanisms	Quality of Life				Total		P-value	OR
	Poor Quality of Life		Good Quality of Life					
	N	%	n	%	n	%		
Adaptive	14	25.0	42	75.0	56	68.3	0,025	0,333 (0.125-0.887)
Maladaptive	13	50.0	13	50.0	26	31.7		
Total	27	32.9	55	67.1	82	100%		

Based on Table above, of the 56 respondents, 42 (75.0%) reported a good quality of life, while 14 (25.0%) reported a poor quality of life. Meanwhile, of the 26 respondents with maladaptive coping mechanisms, 13 (50.0%) reported a good quality of life and 13 (50.0%) reported a poor quality of life. The chi-square test yielded a p-value of 0.025 ($p\text{-value} < \alpha = 0.50$), indicating a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and the quality of life of breast cancer patients in the outpatient department (oncology clinic) of Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Regional General Hospital, Lampung Province, in 2025.

Discussion

Adaptive coping mechanisms in this study were demonstrated by patients' attempts to talk to others, seek more information about the problem at hand, and connect the situation or issue to supernatural powers, such as engaging in religious activities and prayer. Adaptive coping mechanisms in breast cancer patients included emotional control, constant prayer, sharing with others, problem-solving, accepting support, maintaining high alertness, paying greater attention to problems, and maintaining a broad perspective.

The researchers' assumptions are supported by research (Astuti et al., 2019), which found that accepting emotions and problems by seeking social support, improving oneself, and increasing religious practices led to greater surrender and trust in God, as this reduced stress levels.

According to the researchers' assumptions, 26 respondents (31.7%) still used maladaptive coping mechanisms. This was due to their lingering anxiety about their condition and often giving up on treatment. They were unfamiliar with and still adapting to the treatment process, making them unable to anticipate the problems that might arise from chemotherapy. The researcher's assumption above is supported by research (Romaningsih et al., 2022), which found that maladaptive patient coping mechanisms lead to low self-acceptance. Breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy generally experience side effects that disrupt activities, creating new problems for them.

Maladaptive coping mechanisms focus on emotions, where self-development tends to address problems with maladaptive coping mechanisms in breast cancer patients. Patients fear asking those who understand their health issues, such as consulting with healthcare professionals, and self-development can help them manage their emotions, such as experiencing worse situations and seeing the positive side of problems.

A study conducted by researchers on 82 respondents regarding the quality of life of breast cancer patients at Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Regional Hospital, Lampung Province, in 2024 found that 55 respondents (67.1%) had a good quality of life, while 27 respondents (32.9%) had a poor quality of life. Therefore, the majority of respondents (55 respondents (67.1%)) had a good quality of life.

The research results showed that the majority of respondents (55 respondents, 67.1%) reported a good quality of life. This was evident in the fact that some respondents reported accepting their body appearance, remaining active and working, enjoying life, feeling meaningful, being able to concentrate, having good social interactions, living in a healthy environment, and having support from family and friends, which facilitated a calmer life. The study concluded that respondents had a relatively good quality of life because they understood themselves well and did not frequently think or feel negatively about their illness. The respondents' quality of life was also considered good, and they understood their illness. The greater their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, the higher their quality of life.

These research findings align with those of Nurhikmah et al., 2019, which found a correlation between coping mechanisms and quality of life in breast cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy (p-value 0.048 ($\alpha = 0.05$)). Hospitals should facilitate interaction with other breast cancer patients to share experiences on improving their quality of life.

According to the researcher's assumption, the psychological dimensions of respondents were that they no longer enjoyed life, felt their life was meaningless, were unable to carry out activities due to the pain they experienced, were not accepting of their body appearance, and were unable to socialize with others.

This research aligns with research conducted by (Amelia et al., 2020), which found several psychological effects in breast cancer patients undergoing treatment, including feelings of anxiety about no longer being attractive, shame/lack of confidence due to physical changes, helplessness, easily discouraged due to the long chemotherapy process, feelings of being unaccepted by others, low self-esteem due to the loss of breasts, and irritability due to the inability to care for a family.

This research aligns with research conducted by Nomiko (2020), which found a significant relationship between the duration of cancer and the quality of life of breast cancer patients. Any physical illness experienced by a person brings not only physical problems but also psychological ones. This is evident in breast cancer patients; when a doctor diagnoses them with a life-threatening disease, emotional problems can arise.

The results of this study align with those of Malau (2023) on the Relationship between Coping Mechanisms and Quality of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at Haji Adam Malik General Hospital, Medan, in 2023. Researchers demonstrated a relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life in breast cancer patients at Haji Adam Malik General Hospital, Medan, in 2023. Statistical results using the Spearman rank test obtained a p-value of 0.001 < 0.05. Patients are expected to collaborate with families to motivate and support patients in their recovery and improve their quality of life.

Conclusion

The relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life of breast cancer patients at Dr. H. Abdul Moeloek Regional General Hospital, Lampung Province, in 2025. The chi-square test found a p-value of 0.025 < 0.05, indicating a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life in breast cancer patients. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Further research should conduct larger sample sizes and enrich the analysis. Future research can add other variables that may play a role in the relationship between coping mechanisms and quality of life, such as social support or stress levels, and focus on managing a long study schedule.

Conflict of Interest

No declare.

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