

Hope as prevention of suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour among cancer patients

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Introduction

Earlier studies have identified cancer as a risk factor for suicidal behaviour. Studies of hope among cancer patients are often subjected to discussion whether, when patients fill out the Herth Hope Index, it really measures hope – even though the HHI has been thoroughly tested.



Objective

The objective of this study is to uncover and illuminate hope as a protective factor for suicidal ideation and attempted suicide among those affected by cancer. Hope is a very complex concept and the sciences of philosophy, theology and medicine disagree on how to describe and define hope. Also, hope varies according to different culture groups.

Definition

In this study, hope is defined as being inborn, both spontaneous and sovereign. In relation to another person hope can be inspired or weakened.

Method

Interviews with 37 cancer patients (13 men and 24 women), 14 relations (7 men and 7 women), and 5 professionals (1 man and 4 women).

Results

Results show that it is not the examinations, the disease, operation, treatment or follow-up checks that weakens hope and evoke suicidal ideation – rather, it is the doctors' lacking etiquette and violation of the International Code of Medical Ethics. Cancer affected know that they are seriously ill and that they may die from their illness. But if their hope of care and dignity is accommodated from diagnosis onwards – even at life's end, suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour lessen or stay away completely.

THE INTERNATIONAL CODE OF MEDICAL ETHICS DUTIES OF DOCTORS IN GENERAL

A DOCTOR SHALL respect the rights of patients.

A DOCTOR SHALL act only in the patient's interest when providing medical care which might have the effect of weakening the physical and mental condition of the patient.



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