Social support and its relationship to self hardiness among breast cancer women

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Abstract---Background: Social support for cancer patients can get him out of the atmosphere of the disease and inspire him with a great deal of optimism and hope and make him forget his illness even temporarily, and this contributes to strengthening the patient's ability to confront his illness from a physical, psychological and social aspect. Therefore, thus aimed to assess social support and its relationship to self hardiness among breast cancer women. Therefore, the present study aimed to assess social support and its relationship to self hardiness among breast cancer women in Babylon Province/ Iraq Methods: A descriptive correlational study was conducted with a purposeful sample of 200 women using a non-probability sampling approach. The reliability of the questionnaire was achieved through a pilot study and then presented to experts to prove its validity. The total number of items included in the questionnaire was 16 items for social support and 21 items for self hardiness. The data was collected using the personal interview method and analyzed by applying the descriptive and deductive approach to statistical data analysis. Results: The results of the study indicated that (61.5%) of the women showed moderate social support and (53.5%) showed a lack of self hardiness. There was a significant positive association between social support and self hardiness in women diagnosed with breast cancer (r = 0.386; p = 0.000). Conclusions: The study concluded that mean social support of respondents was 30.1, and the self hardiness was 34.75. Statistical significance correlation was found between social support and self hardiness (r=0.386; p=0.000). The study adds knowledge related to health education for all segments of society towards cancer patients. More studies is needed to explore the needs of breast cancer patients.

Introduction

Globally, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, comprising 23% of the 1.1 million female cancers that are newly diagnosed each year [1]. It is also the leading cause of cancer-related deaths worldwide, case fatality rates being highest in low resource countries [2]. Approximately 4.4 million women diagnosed with breast cancer in the last 5 years are still alive, making breast cancer the most prevalent cancer worldwide [3]. In Iraq, breast cancer is the commonest type of female malignancy, accounting for approximately one-third of the registered female cancers according to the latest Iraqi Cancer Registry. This shows that the breast is the leading cancer site among the Iraqi population in general, surpassing even bronchogenic cancer [4]. As social support is an important source of security that a person needs from the world in which he lives, when he feels that there is something threatening his life and health, from his energy has been exhausted and stressed, so he needs aid and assistance from outside, represented in the various directions around him, with the aim of strengthening Intrinsic toughness, which attracted the attention of many researchers when they found the important positive effects in the patient's overcoming of many stressful situations and psychological stress, and what it does in relieving the results of stress and difficult situations [5]. The interest in the issue of social support is also due to its being an important factor in determining the nature of the daily relationships and interactions of the individual with those around him in the various areas of life, which are considered among the factors of psychological and social compatibility at the personal and societal levels through its social support, when the individual obtains information or assistance This makes him feel the social support and care of those around him, which enhances the feeling of the individual, who is one of the components of the social network, of belonging to the group, and all of this plays an important role in maintaining the unity of the body and the psychological health of the individual [6].

The researcher believes that the individual who enjoys social support from others and enjoys a high degree of self-hardiness, becomes a self-confident person, able to provide social comfort to others, becomes less vulnerable to psychological disorders, more able to resist and overcome frustrations, and is able to solve his problems in a way healthy positive. Therefore, we find that social support increases the individual's ability to resist frustration, reduces a lot of his psychological suffering, and then raises his level of self-hardiness.. Therefore, the present study aimed to assess social support and its relationship to self hardiness among breast cancer women in Babylon Province/ Iraq.

Methodology

A correlational study design is conducted in Nasiriyah City among women with breast cancer. A Purposive (non-probability) samples of 150 women who attending oncology center for the purpose of treatment.

Study tools

The instruments underlying the study phenomenon deals with patients socio-demographic characteristics, social support and self-hardiness questionnaire developed and constructed to describe study phenomenon. The total number of items included in the questionnaire was 16 items for social support measured on 3-point scale and 21 items for self hardiness measured on 3-point scale. The researcher adhered to the rules of writing the questionnaire due to the importance of the type of information that the researcher is keen to be sufficient and comprehensive for all aspects of the problem and can be relied upon and trusted. To vague and complex answers. The type of questions was of the closed type, which required answering with reference to what was appropriate.

Validity and Reliability

Validity was determined by a panel of 11 arbitrators who were asked to comment on each component of the study questionnaire in terms of language appropriateness, correlation with the dimension of study variables to which it was assigned, and suitability for the study population. Data was obtained from women to assess the questionnaire's reliability, and the test was delivered to 30 people from the study population who were not part of the initial sample. The Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.87.

Method of Statistic

A SPSS-20.0 were used analyzed the information was evenly distributed. One-way analysis of variance and Spearman's Correlation Coefficient variations and correlation in study variables based on social support and self hardiness. For continuous variables, descriptive data is reported as mean standard deviation, and for categorical variables, it is shown as number (percent). Statistical significance was defined as a p 0.05. The overall responses according to total mean of score (M) which follow: (Poor=16-26; Moderate=27-37; Good=38-48) as a social support level. A total mean of score for self hardiness as follow:

M=21-35 refers to low Self Hardiness.
M=36-49 refers to Moderate Self Hardiness.
M=50-63 refers to High Self Hardiness.

Results

Finding in table (1) show participants age, the mean age is 29 (±11.57), the age 50-59 years old were recorded the highest percentage 75 (37.5%) and the lowest percentage were aged <40 years 19 (9.5%). In regarding with economic status, breast cancer women expressed insufficient economic 110 (55%) and small ration for those who are sufficient economic 43 (21.5%). In terms of marital status, it is obvious that the married women constituted the majority 155 (77.5%), and the lowest percentage were widower 3 (1.5%). Education related findings, the elementary school graduated were most of the studied sample 91 (45.5%) and the lowest percentage were middle and secondary school 14 (7%) for each them. Concerning occupation, the unemployment women were highest percentage 152

(76%) and the lowest of them were employed 7 (3.5%). Finally, most of women exhibit for less than 5 years as a duration of breast cancer 169 (84.5) without family history of disease 160 (80%).

Table (1):Socio-Demographic Characteristics

	Classification	Freq.	%
Age/years (*M± SD= 49.29±11.57*)	<30 years old	19	9.5
	30-39 years old	19	9.5
	40-49 years old	48	24.0
	50-59 years old	75	37.5
	60 and older	39	19.5
Economic status	Sufficient	43	21.5
	Moderate	47	23.5
	Insufficient	110	55.0
Marital status	Single	27	13.5
	Married	155	77.5
	Divorced	15	7.5
	Widower	3	1.5
Education level	Unable to read and write	31	15.5
	Read and write	16	8.0
	Elementary school	91	45.5
	Middle school	14	7.0
	Secondary school	14	7.0
	College and above	34	17.0
Occupation	Employee	7	3.5
	Housewife	26	13.0
	Retired	15	7.5
	Unemployment	152	76.0
Duration of Cancer	<5 years	169	84.5
	5-10 years	23	11.5
	>10 years	8	4.0
Family history of Cancer	Yes	40	20.0
	No	160	80.0

Findings in table (2) demonstrated that the (61.5%) of breast cancer women exhibited a moderate social support as described by moderate mean scores 30 (±5.81).

Table (2):Social Support

Social Support	Freq.	%	*M ± SD*
Poor (M=16-26)	54	27.0	
Moderate (M=27-37)	123	61.5	*30.1±5.81*
Good (M=38-48)	23	11.5	
Total	200	100.0	

M: Mean for total score, SD=Standard Deviation for total score

Findings in table (3) demonstrated that the (53.5%) of breast cancer women illustrated a low self hardiness as described by low mean scores 34 (±15.16).

Table (3):Self Hardiness

Self Hardiness	Freq.	%	M ± SD
Low (M=21-35)	107	53.5	
Moderate (M=36-49)	37	18.5	34.75±15.16
High (M=50-63)	56	28.0	
Total	200	100.0	

M: Mean for total score, SD=Standard Deviation for total score

Findings exhibit there were significant correlation (positive) between social support and self hardiness (r=0.386; p=0.000).

Table (4).Association between Social Support and Self Hardiness among Breast Cancer Women (n=200)

	Social Support		
	Spearman's rho	.386**	Positive Sig.
Self Hardiness	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	200	

Simple linear regression test confirmed that the significant effect of social support on self hardiness (p=0.000).

Table (5).Simple Liner Regression between Social Support and Self Hardiness among Breast Cancer Women (n=200)

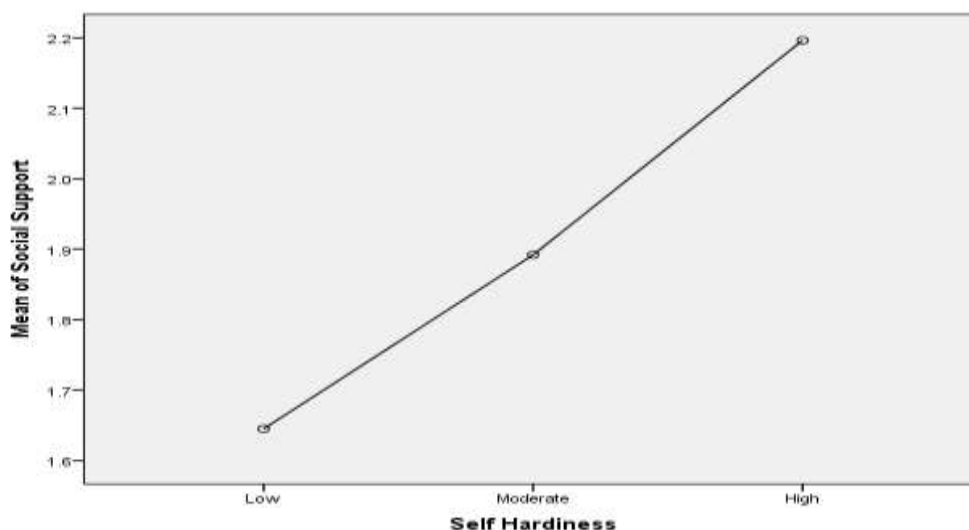| Social Support Vs. Self Hardiness	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
	.569	.094	.395	6.048	.000

Figure 1:Distribution of Self Hardiness according to Social Support

Discussion

Social support can bring him out of the atmosphere of illness and inspire in him a great degree of optimism and hope and make him forget his illness, even temporarily, and this contributes to strengthening the patient's ability to confront his illness, not only from a psychological point of view, but also from a biological-clinical, as many studies have proven that Social support strengthens hope in life, and this hope, in turn, contributes to enhancing the patient's immune response. The study aimed to investigate the social support and its relation to self hardiness.

Findings demonstrated that the (61.5%) of breast cancer women exhibited a moderate social support as described by moderate mean scores 30 (±5.81). Our findings come in agreement with findings of Salakari et al. (2017) who demonstrated in their findings that the close relative (12.0%) and friends (5.4%) support [7]. As confirmed by Sørensen et al. (2020), showed that the beast cancer women receive more family support than support from relatives and friends [8]. In the study conducted by Eylen to determine the social support level in cancer patients, the support received from families was found to be high [9]. Similar studies also reported that social support is mostly received from family members [10], [11], [12].

In Egypt, a low degree of social support was reported in 119 patients (39.5%), a moderate degree in 101 patients (33.6%), and a high degree in 81 patients (26.9%). Social support is related to many psychological factors, which can be quantitatively analyzed and it can predict hope [13]. Social support may even affect the outcome of breast cancer therapy; Spiegel et al. (1989) published what would become a landmark study showing that women with metastatic breast cancer who participated in an expressive supportive group therapy intervention lived about twice as long as women who had a similar condition [14]. The comprehensive understanding of patients' healthy social support reactions

towards breast cancer is a necessary matter to determine standards of care and treatment vectors for women with breast cancer who are psychologically healthy and others who suffer from psychological disorders which may significantly delay or complicate treatment [15].

Findings demonstrated that the (53.5%) of breast cancer women illustrated a low self hardiness as described by low mean scores 34 (±15.16). In line with this, findings from this research study are showing that patients from Greece have moderate levels of resilience [16]. The study of Ristevska-Dimitrovska (2015) indicated that a sample of women with breast cancer in Bitola and Skopje also declared moderate levels of resilience (74.7±14.6) [17]. Moreover, Kim et al. (2015) in their study found that resilience scores in a sample of 106 women from Korea is 69.77 (±19.49), mean considered to be moderate as well [18]. Findings exhibit there were significant correlation (positive) between social support and self hardiness (r=0.386; p=0.000). The sample of breast cancer patients responded between social support and their self hardness, which indicates that the greater the degree of social support that breast cancer patients receive, the higher their psychological hardness and to a high degree.

On other hand, the simple linear regression test confirmed that the significant effect of social support on self hardiness, the results showed a high ability to influence social support on the level of self hardiness based on the study's criteria, as the model can predict the level of self hardiness based on the extent of social support that a breast cancer patient receives That is, the high social support is significantly associated with high self hardness, and lack social support is significantly associated with low self hardness (Fig. 1). This was confirmed by the study Ercan (2017), which indicated that there is a positive correlation between social skills and psychological toughness among Mansoura University students [19].

Our results are also similar with the findings of the study Jin & Dewaele (2018), which indicated that there is a positive relationship between social support and orientation towards life [20], as the results of the study Suwankhong & Liamputtong (2016) showed that there is a relationship between the total degree of psychological hardness and the total degree of social support, a positive correlation statistically significant among women treated for breast cancer [21]. This result confirms the strength of the impact of social support for breast cancer women in increasing the degree of their self hardness and their ability to confront and bear pressures, especially when they receive support and help from those around them, and when they are the subject of care and attention from others, and when they have good social relations and constant encouragement from relatives, friends and neighbours, support makes them they stand on their feet in the face of the most dangerous diseases of the age, and they are sure that they are not alone in the battle of their lives, which is often threatened by death.

As the social support that a breast cancer patient receives from those around him has a great role in alleviating the pain of trauma and increasing her ability to bear it in a high way. exposure to stressful events such as cancer, it increases the individual's use of his appropriate personal and social resources towards these

conditions and prevents cancer from reaching a state of chronic despair and feeling drained of his energy.

Conclusion

The results showed that mean social support of respondents was 30.1, and the self hardiness was 34.75. Statistical significance correlation was found between social support and self hardiness (r=0.386; p=0.000). The study adds knowledge regarding health education for all segments of society towards cancer patients. Further study is needed to explore breast cancer patients' needs.

Study Suggestion

1. The necessity of designing educational guidance programs targeting women suffering from breast cancer, and providing them with care and social support.
2. Building and providing awareness and educational programs related to guiding breast cancer patients on how to deal with the effects of the disease and its treatment, which increases their self hardiness.

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