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Relationship of Patience and Self- Compassion with Depression in Patients with Breast Cancer

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Abstract

Introduction: Breast cancer is one of the common malignant cancers in the world. Being informed about having the disease often causes mental distress and depression in patients. Studies show that the prevalence of depression in patients with breast cancer is 13% to 33%. Therefore, the present study was conducted to determine the predictive factors for depression in patients with breast cancer. The researchers also aimed at studying the associations among compassion, patience, and depression in breast cancer patients.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study. The study population included all the women with breast cancer referred to the chemotherapy and oncology departments in Mahdieh Clinical Center, Imam Khomeini Hospital, Firoozgar Hospital, and Pars Hospital in Tehran in 2017. A sample of 397 patients was selected based on the Cochran formula through availability sampling. Participants completed Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI), the patience questionnaire by Khormaei et al, and Neff's Self-compassion Scale. A multiple stepwise regression was performed to determine the role of patience and compassion in predicting depression, and the relationships among depression, compassion, and patience were explored by calculating the Pearson correlation coefficients. All analyses were performed using SPSS 24.

Results: No significant relationship was observed between depression and patience ($r = 0.07$, $p > 0.05$), but there was a relationship between depression and transcendence ($r = 0.08$, $p < 0.05$), patience ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$), satisfaction ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$), and hesitation ($r = -0.09$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, correlation coefficients for depression and other components were obtained (overall compassion score: $r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$; self-kindness: $r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$; self-judgment: $r = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$; mindfulness: $r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$; and common humanity ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). Self-kindness and common humanity accounted for 15% of the variance in depression in patients with cancer ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: Patience enhances tolerance by developing resilience. On the other hand, self-compassion leads to higher emotional flexibility in dealing with cancer. Thus, it could be concluded that there is a relationship between self-compassion and depression in patients with breast cancer. Therefore, it is suggested that health professionals in hospitals should pay attention to enhancing patience and kindness in their interventions.

Keywords: Patience, Compassion, Depression, Breast Cancer