Influences of Marital Status on Quality of Life for Low-Income Cancer Survivors

Abstract

Introduction: Low-income cancer survivors encounter several barriers that may impact their overall quality of life (QOL), such as lack of insurance coverage, poor access to health care services, or unaffordable costs of health care. Being married or having a significant other could affect QOL for these low-income survivors. The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the differences in QOL between married and unmarried low-income cancer survivors.

Methods: This study is a secondary analysis of Meraviglia’s research *Low-Income Cancer Survivors’ Use of Health-Promoting Behaviors* (2012). Descriptive characteristics about the cancer survivors (n=51) were collected using the Background Information Sheet (BIS) and the Characteristics of Cancer Questionnaire (CC). QOL was measured using the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-General scale (FACIT-G) with an additional spiritual component (FACIT-Sp). Data from the demographic characteristics and the FACIT was analyzed using two-tailed t-tests (p < 0.05) to determine differences between the married and unmarried groups.

Results: The mean FACIT scores were higher for the married group than the unmarried group in each dimension of QOL. This data is statistically significant because the two-tailed one-sample t-tests for each dimension of QOL each have p-values < 0.05.

Conclusions: Married low-income cancer survivors (n=17) show higher QOL than unmarried survivors (n=34). Future research could explore the qualities of a married relationship that enhance QOL in addition to discovering ways to apply those characteristics to the unmarried population.

Key Words: marital status; significant other; quality of life; low-income; cancer survivor