



Cancer : emotional experiences

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Lancaster University

Thesis

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Monografía

Cancer can have major implications for those who receive a diagnosis, not only as a result of its physical impact, but its emotional one. The emotional impact can not only be distressing in itself, it can also affect behaviour and therefore, has been linked to poorer treatment adherence. The experience of difficult self-directed emotions, such as guilt, shame and disgust have provoked particular interest, particularly due to their association with rejection and avoidance. Therefore, insight into how and when these emotions are experienced within the cancer treatment journey are important to understand, in order that optimum support can be provided. The first paper is a thematic synthesis that explores the emotional experiences of people undergoing cancer treatment with a curative intent. The synthesis is structured by a sequential framework of four key transition points within the cancer journey, and the emotional experiences synthesised within each one. The temporal transition points were: Being diagnosed and facing treatment; Getting rid of cancer; Changed body and stigma; Reflections on the emotional journey having completed treatment. The synthesis demonstrates how emotions and feelings evolve and change in type, frequency and intensity across the curative cancer journey. The second study uses narrative analysis methodology to explore difficult self-directed emotions throughout cancer treatment and into recovery. The analysis focuses on how and when the emotions of disgust, guilt, shame and fear arise, as well as resulting changes to the sense of self. The findings demonstrate how many factors, such as relationships, current stressors, past experiences and resources (personal and systemic) can impact on emotional experiences. The critical appraisal focuses on strengths and weaknesses of the studies, particularly in relational to emotional research considerations more generally

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Baratz Innovación Documental

- Gran Vía, 59 28013 Madrid
- (+34) 91 456 03 60
- informa@baratz.es