



THE SPECIFICITY OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ONCOLOGY PATIENTS

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***Annotatsiya** This article discusses the psychological state of oncological patients and their emotional reactions to a cancer diagnosis. The patients' states of stress, fear, depression, as well as the impact of family support on psychological stability are analyzed. The article highlights the main areas of psychological care - cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation and emotional support. The results emphasize the importance of a psychological approach in improving the mental health and quality of life of oncological patients.*

***Keywords:** Oncological, psychological characteristics, stress, depression, psychotherapy.*

Introduction. Oncological diseases are one of the most complex problems today, not only from a medical but also from a psychological and social perspective. A patient diagnosed with cancer undergoes dramatic changes in their life, as such a diagnosis increases thoughts of death, fear, anxiety, despair, and uncertainty about the future. The psychological characteristics of oncological patients require special study, since not only the disease itself, but also the methods of treatment for it, physical changes, social attitudes, and family support factors play an important role in this process. The patient's mental state affects the effectiveness of treatment, how easy or difficult the process will be, and

even the functioning of the immune system. Therefore, in-depth psychological study of oncological patients and the development of an appropriate approach to them are one of the urgent tasks of modern psychology.

Literature review

An oncological diagnosis first of all causes a strong psychological shock in a person. The initial reactions in most cases begin with shock, disbelief, rejection and doubt about the diagnosis. The denial phase is one of the mechanisms of a person's psychological self-defense. After this stage, there is often a strong fear, a sense of danger to life, anxiety about the treatment process, a feeling of losing family members or being a burden to them. A cancer diagnosis makes the fear of death one of the most active mechanisms, and this fear usually takes over a person's entire thoughts. In this process, self-blame, questions such as "why me?", "where did I go wrong?" also increase.

One of the important aspects of psychological characteristics in oncological patients is emotional lability. The patient's mood can change very quickly: one minute hope increases, and a little later depression deepens again. Such variability is due to the body's strong reaction to stress. In addition, the patient perceives any changes in his body with excessive sensitivity. Physical changes after chemotherapy or radiotherapy - hair loss, skin color change, weight loss, fatigue - cause the patient to have low self-esteem, be ashamed of how he looks in the eyes of others, and withdraw from social activities. Difficulties in accepting the body increase depressive feelings in many patients. Another factor shaping the psychological state of oncological patients is the loss of a sense of control. A person usually wants to control his life,

but after such a diagnosis, it seems that life management is out of hand. The patient feels that his life is controlled by doctors, tests, examinations, and medication schedules. This loss of control increases mental instability, anxiety, and despair. Also, a large number of oncological patients are accompanied by a condition called “medical fatigue” - constant fatigue, insomnia, irritability, and mental tension.

During the treatment of cancer, the patient's mental state gradually changes. If shock and denial prevail at the diagnostic stage, then during active treatment, physical discomfort, pain, and the effects of medications combine with mental fatigue and intensify depressive feelings. In the remission stage, the disease.

The fear of relapse remains the strongest psychological problem. In the terminal stage, the meaning of life, assessment of the past life, mental pain, and loneliness deepen. Each of these stages requires a separate approach from the psychologist. The process of providing psychological support to oncological patients is complex, but extremely necessary. First of all, psychological support alleviates the patient's emotional state, reduces fear and stress.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy, supportive psychotherapy, relaxation techniques, breathing exercises, and stress management methods help increase mental stability in patients. Moral support from family members is also very important, because the more the patient feels alone, the deeper the depression. Also, providing the patient with accurate information about the disease, explaining the stages of treatment, and clearly answering their questions relieves psychological pressure. Providing information — psychoeducation — returns the

patient to a sense of control over the disease, reduces the concerns that "I don't know anything."

Psychological support for cancer patients not only increases mental stability, but also their motivation for treatment. According to research, patients with a stable mental state have a smoother treatment process, they follow doctor's instructions better, and their quality of life indicators are higher. Therefore, psychological support is a necessary element of treatment for cancer patients, along with medication and medical procedures.

Oncological diseases are one of the most complex and multifaceted problems of modern medicine, which lead not only to physical, but also to deep psychological, social and spiritual consequences. A cancer diagnosis is considered one of the most powerful blows to the human psyche. Because it embodies such factors as a matter of life and death, uncertainty about the future, constant anxiety, mental fatigue and fading hope. Such a diagnosis is not only a process of fighting the disease for the patient, but also the beginning of a period of deep psychological adaptation. It is not for nothing that the study of the psychological characteristics of oncological patients has been formed as a separate direction in the science of psychology. Because the mental state

directly affects the patient's attitude to treatment, motivation, psychosomatic reactions and even the activity of the immune system.

A person diagnosed with cancer usually experiences several stages of psychological reactions. The first stage is shock and denial, when the patient does not believe the diagnosis, considers it a mistake or temporarily denies it. This period is interpreted in psychology as one of the defense mechanisms. After moving to the stage of accepting the

diagnosis, fear, anxiety and internal conflict increase. A person begins to think about death, the uncertainty of the outcome of treatment puts psychological pressure on him. Since cancer is one of the strongest associations with death, fear can be very real, deep and continuous. One of the psychological characteristics of oncological patients is emotional instability. Mood swings are frequent, and even minor stresses can trigger a strong reaction. The physical changes that occur after chemotherapy, radiotherapy, or surgery can have a profound impact on a patient's psyche. Hair loss, weight gain, skin discoloration, fatigue, and pain can all contribute to low self-esteem and body image issues. Female patients are particularly prone to psychological problems related to their physical appearance. They may withdraw from social life because they feel they must look "different" in society.

Another psychological feature that is common in oncology patients is the loss of a sense of control. The patient feels as if he is deprived of the opportunity to make decisions about his life. Daily examinations, taking medication, doctor's instructions, and treatment schedules completely take over his life. This situation can lead to an internal feeling that "my life does not belong to me." At the same time, symptoms such as mental fatigue, insomnia, inability to concentrate, and irritability increase during the treatment process. With the influence of prolonged severe stress, depression can also develop in the patient. Each stage of cancer has its own psychological processes. While shock and denial prevail during the diagnostic stage, physical pain, overwhelming fatigue, and side effects during the active treatment stage further aggravate the psychological state. During the remission period, fear of relapse becomes the main psychological factor becomes.

This fear often does not leave the patient for years. In the terminal stage, the meaning of life, assessment of the past life, mental anguish and internal acceptance processes take center stage. Psychological support for oncological patients is a complex but necessary process. The approaches used by psychologists — supportive therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques, meditation, stress management techniques — help restore the patient's mental stability. In addition, providing the patient with accurate information about the disease — psychoeducation — reduces fear, restores a sense of control and increases confidence in treatment. Psychological support from family members is also extremely important. Patients who are supported by loved ones perceive the treatment process more positively, are more motivated and are less prone to social isolation. Scientific studies show that patients with good mental health also have a more active immune system, the body produces fewer stress hormones, and this increases the effectiveness of treatment. Therefore, psychological support should be an obligatory element of treatment for oncological patients, along with medication, surgery or chemotherapy. Providing an individual approach, taking into account the patient's mental state, is the most important area of cooperation between medicine and psychology.

Summary

In conclusion, the psychological characteristics of oncological patients are extremely complex, multifaceted and manifest themselves in each patient in their own way. A diagnosis of cancer radically changes the human psyche, reshapes it, and in many cases renews outlooks on life. During this process, it is of great importance to support the patient psychologically, reduce fear and stress, and restore hope and faith in life.

Psychological support not only increases the effectiveness of medical treatment, but also significantly improves the patient's quality of life. Therefore, one of the most important aspects of working with oncological patients is the need for psychological and medical support to complement each other.

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