

ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Relationship between Cancer Patients and Their quality of Life in Trinidad and Tobago

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This thesis analyses the relationship between cancer and quality of life (QoL) of patients attending the National Radiotherapy Centre, St James.

Quality of life is conceptualized as a person's position in life in the context of their goals, expectations and the effects of these on the person's physical and psychological state, level of independence, and social relationships. Research has suggested that cancer impacts the quality of life (QoL) of patients. Furthermore, several predictors of QoL in patients exist, namely years since diagnosis, type of cancer, stage, and treatment, and studies have examined this relationship. In developing this thesis, the researcher drew on Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which anchors the study of this relationship. The SCT concept of outcome expectations refers to the physical, social, and self-evaluative expectations one holds and when there is a negative outcome these lower the QoL.

Utilizing an instrument (EORTC-QLQ 30) to capture both epidemiological (demographic and medical) and quality of life data, as well as focus group sessions, significant relationships were noted between age and quality of life; stages 1 and 2; 1 and 3; 1 and 4 and quality of life and the years since diagnosis and quality of life; sex and quality of life; no significant relationships between treatment and quality of life; type of cancer (breast and prostate) and quality of life. Over 34% of the patients experienced a good quality of life; 27% experienced a very good QoL with only 3% experiencing a very bad QoL. The study concludes that QoL is a relevant concept particularly with respect to cancer management since such a study can facilitate the assessment of the impact of the disease on QoL and allow for strategies to minimize the adverse effects on the lives of cancer patients

Keywords: Agatha Carrington; cancer; quality of life; Social Cognitive Theory.