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TITLE OF THE THESIS: "Psychological Correlates of Pain and effectiveness of Hypnotherapy in Managing Pain in Female Cancer Patients"

Abstract

Introduction: Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women and is seen as a terrifying disease due to a high mortality rate and its impact on self-image. Many patients experience psychological reactions especially anxiety, anger and depression which are common in breast cancer and worsen the disease course and treatment outcomes.

Purpose: to assess the level of pain and its psychological correlates i.e. anxiety, anger, depression and the effectiveness of hypnotherapy in managing pain in advanced breast cancer patients.

Objectives: to compare and see the effect and impact of hypnotherapy on control (medication only) and intervention group (medication with hypnotherapy) on the measures of pain and its dimensions (sensory and reactive dimensions), anxiety, anger and depression under pre and post test conditions and to study the relationship amongst the measures of pain and its dimensions, anxiety, anger and depression in control group, intervention group, pre- and post- test conditions.

Design and sample: A pre - and post - test design was followed in this research and two groups were included i.e. the control group (medication only) and Intervention group (medication with hypnotherapy). A purposive sample of 40 advanced breast

cancer patients was selected from oncology departments 20 patients were assigned to each group.

Measures: Wisconsin Brief Pain Questionnaire, (1991), Beck's Depression Inventory (1996), Beck's Anxiety Inventory, (1990) and Clinical Anger Scale, (1995).

Procedure: The research was conducted in 3 stages. Stage one was scoring, stage 2 intervention and stage 3 scoring and assessment. After rapport formation, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyse the data of patients in both groups- intervention group- hypnotherapy combined with medication group and control group-only medication group. The intervention group consisted of 36 sessions over a period of 12 weeks (3 months) with each session lasting for one hour each twice weekly for each patient for 36 weeks.

Results: The results revealed a more positive and beneficial and significant impact of hypnotherapy in reducing pain, depression, anxiety and anger levels in advanced breast cancer patients as compared to patients who were given only medication. Also there was a positive relationship between depression and anxiety and between anger and depression, between sensory and reactive pain dimensions and anxiety and anger

Conclusion: The current research shows that hypnosis works as part of a treatment program for advanced breast cancer patients with pain relief being very effective. It seemed that patients were receptive to hypnotic suggestions in general, or highly hypnotizable, thus they got relief from hypnosis techniques and showed improvement. On the bases of the results obtained in the present study, it may be concluded that Hypnosis could alleviate the sensory and/or affective component of pain sensation and reduced anxiety, anger and depression amongst breast cancer patients.