

Evaluation of cultural challenges affecting sexual health in breast cancer patients based on PEN educational model

Abstract

Background: With the increasing prevalence of breast cancer and advances in the treatment of this disease, the number of breast cancer survivors is increasing. This issue has led to an increase in secondary issues to treatment, such as problems related to women's sexual health. Therefore, a culture-based approach is necessary to determine the sexual health needs of women with breast cancer. Therefore, the current study was designed and implemented with the aim of investigating the cultural challenges affecting sexual health in patients with breast cancer based on the PEN-3 educational model.

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Materials and methods: This study is qualitative and designed with the content analysis method. After obtaining the code of ethics from the ethics and research committee of the university, the study sample was selected by purposive sampling method by collaborating experts in the project among married women with a history of breast cancer referring to oncology clinics who underwent mastectomy or underwent chemotherapy. Then, in order to check the objectives of the study, a semi-structured interview with open questions was conducted. The results were determined and separated based on the structures of the PEN model.

Results: The information obtained from the present study was divided into 3 classes based on the cultural PEN-3 model, including the class of cultural perception and inferences, the class of empowerment and enabling factors, and the class of nurturers and cultural boosters. Also, by examining patients' reactions to sexual problems and their sources of help and support, the

supportive role of the wife and the doctor's information became more prominent. The results of the present study showed that contrary to the necessity of access to sexual health information to empower them to face the challenges caused by breast cancer, affected women face some informational barriers such as the privacy of sexual issues and embarrassment about the issue, as well as other physical problems. According to the study's statements, doctors, health centers, and the Internet were among the most important sources of information, however, nearly a third of the participants had no access to information sources.

Conclusion: By examining the cultural challenges affecting sexual health in patients with breast cancer, the present study led to the identification of sexual problems and their significant prevalence in women with a history of breast cancer. Although the findings cannot be generalized, it can be used as a starting point for the implementation of policies and strategies aimed at increasing women's access to information, especially through national and mass media, expanding health care and services, and correcting and removing effective cultural, social and economic barriers. It was applied to the health of women suffering from certain diseases such as breast cancer.

Keywords: Breast cancer, sexual health, cultural challenges, PEN-3 educational model.