

Spiritual Practices and Spiritual Well-Being of Women with Gynecological Cancer

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Abstract

Cancer is a serious life occurrence that can leave a person physically and mentally devastated. Of the 403.6 per 100,000 cases of diagnosed women's cancer, there are approximately 47.5 cancers of the female genital system. These cancers affect the natural foundation of women's uniqueness, the source of their ability to procreate, and remind them of their loss of sexuality. The aims of this study were to identify the spiritual practices of women with gynecological cancer and women without cancer, describe the spiritual well-being among these two groups of women, and compare the spiritual well-being of women with gynecological cancer to those without cancer. A quantitative comparative descriptive research design utilizing cross-sectional data was used. The sample consisted of 85 women diagnosed with gynecological cancer who are patients of a gynecologic-oncology practice in the southeast United States, and a comparison group of 100 women without cancer. Instruments used included a background data questionnaire, the Spiritual Practices Checklist, and the Spirituality Index of Well-Being (SIWB). Family activities, listening to music, and helping others were the spiritual practices most frequently used by both groups. T-test analysis revealed a significant difference between the groups; the cancer group was significantly older than the non cancer group ($p < .01$). After controlling for age, there was no significant difference between the two groups in Self-Efficacy, Life Scheme, and overall Spiritual Well-Being ($p > .05$). Internal consistency reliability for both subscales of the SIWB was good. Findings suggested that both groups used similar spiritual practices. Recommendations for clinical practice are included. Additional studies are needed to further understandings of the spiritual practices and spiritual well-being of women with gynecological cancer.