

Assessment of a Structured Self-Management Support Intervention by Nurses for Patients With Incurable Cancer

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OBJECTIVES: To gain an understanding of the perceptions of patients with incurable cancer regarding a new nurse-led self-management support intervention with an integrated eHealth application (Oncokompas) and its potential effectiveness.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 36 patients receiving support in the home setting.

METHODS & VARIABLES: A pre- and post-test mixed-methods design was used with a period of 12 weeks between the tests and qualitative interviews. Outcome measures were the perceived application of the intervention, patient satisfaction, patient activation, and quality of life.

RESULTS: 85% of patients were satisfied with the assessment of their needs and the advice received. They valued nurses' expertise and the assistance provided in their homes. Twenty-five percent of the patients used Oncokompas. However, no statistically significant changes in patient activation and quality of life were found.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: This intervention can be used for encouraging self-management by patients with incurable cancer. Additional refinement and tailoring is desirable. Offering the intervention as early in the palliative phase as possible is recommended.

KEYWORDS self-management; palliative care; patient activation; quality of life; eHealth

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Medical advances are allowing patients with incurable cancer to live independently for a longer period of time. Living with the knowledge of a limited life expectancy, the uncertainty that comes with that knowledge, and the deterioration of health may negatively affect daily living and may result in a loss of self-management capacities (Bailey et al., 2011; Moens et al., 2014). In this regard, self-management support can be helpful. The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of how patients with incurable cancer perceive a nurse-led self-management support intervention with an optional integrated eHealth application and its potential efficacy for enhancing patient activation and quality of life (QOL).

Self-management is a dynamic, interactive daily process that individuals use for managing their illness (Lorig & Holman, 2003). Self-management refers to a person's ability to manage physical and psychosocial symptoms and to make decisions concerning treatment and/or care to best integrate the disease into daily life and to maintain satisfactory QOL despite the disease (Barlow et al., 2002; Bodenheimer et al., 2002). Prerequisites for self-management include knowledge about the disease and being able to acquire, select, and use appropriate information and help, both professional and other types (Barlow et al., 2002; Bodenheimer et al., 2002; Schulman-Green et al., 2012).

Self-management, however, is not easy for everyone, and some people need help managing the effect of their disease on daily life. Self-management is challenging for patients with incurable cancer who have to deal with physical deterioration and a limited life expectancy (Bailey et al., 2011; Moens et al., 2014). These patients may need self-management support. Self-management support is a collaborative approach