

4th World Congress on

Breast Pathology and Cancer Diagnosis

August 23-24, 2017 Toronto, Canada

Psychopathology and psychiatric interventions in a group of hospitalized breast cancer inpatients - A contribution to liaison-consultation psychiatry

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Background: Psychosocial stress and psychopathological abnormalities are expected in cancer patients at a frequency of 30% to 60%. Apart from decreased quality of life psychological factors may cause a negative impact on treatment-compliance and on the biological course of the tumor development subsequently.

Materials & Methods: We examined the association of different psychiatric and psychotherapeutic interventions in liaison-consultation psychiatry with the four psychopathological dimensions derived by factor analysis based on the items of psycho oncological basic documentation in a group of 141 breast cancer patients without pre-existing mental disorders that were inpatients of a gynecologic cancer center. In addition information concerning subjective stress experience was gathered with the distress-thermometer.

Results: The plausible fit of the various psychiatric and psychotherapeutic interventions due to the psychopathological dimensions and due to the subjective experience of stress could be demonstrated. Those intervention variables that were associated with an improvement of the psychological state could be described as well. The findings showed that improvement or at least permanence of the psychological state was associated with completing of oncological treatment regularly in the relevant index inpatient stay. In addition, it was found that the interventions offered could contribute to improved psychological well-being in the subgroup of patients without mental disorders particularly in normal grief reactions.

Conclusions: Despite methodological limitations our investigation contributes to describe relevant psychopathological syndromes in a group of breast cancer patients without pre-existing mental disorders and the goodness of fit of the different psychiatric and psychotherapeutic interventions. Finally the study confirms the assumption that the stabilization of the mental state may help to avoid treatment interruptions in an oncological inpatient setting and therefore decreases the likelihood that reduced psychological well-being which may impact the biological course of the tumor development negatively.

Biography

Micheal has received the license as a physician in 1983 after finishing school and medical studies at the University of Aachen (RWTH). In 1986, he moved to the municipal clinic Frankfurt Höchst, a teaching hospital of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt in 1988 he became specialist for psychiatry, in 1998 as specialist for psychiatry and psychotherapy. In 1999, he completed his psychoanalytic training. In 2007, Micheal was appointed as an assistant professor of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University and in 2008 he was appointed as physician of the clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy - Psychosomatics at the municipal clinic Frankfurt Höchst. In 2011 he passed the exam for forensic psychiatry. Micheal's main scientific topics are: psychooncology, perinatal psychiatry, aggression in psychiatric patients, and psychotherapy in patients suffering from psychosis.

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