

Correlations Between Cancer Patients' State and Peer Support

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The number one concern for cancer patients is to get rid of the cancer. Because the collective group is most concerned about killing cancer, the patient's mental health and social life are often put on the back burner. However, those other elements of what makes a person a person are important aspects. People are too complicated to isolate a problem like cancer from just cancer. Other factors will influence the cancer.

Peer-to-peer interactions are so important for every person to maintain a healthy mindset. That makes it all the more crucial to a cancer patient. Peer-to-peer help for cancer patients comes from “informational, emotional, and psychological levels,” (Kiemen, A., 2023). However, peer-to-peer interaction becomes all the more difficult when someone spends their energy fighting a disease, going to treatments, and trying to rest. “It has been shown that effective social support, especially through peer support groups, is one of the influencing factors for cancer outcome in general,” (Kroenke [2018](#)). Because of this, we should be finding more and more ways to connect cancer patients to other people.

One way to start integrating cancer patients into social connections is through peer support groups, which connect cancer patients with other cancer patients, who can validate each other's feelings, encourage each other, and calm each other's doubts. “Peer support may support active coping behavior, reduce anxiety, cultivate hope, and help to cope with the fear of cancer recurrence or progressions” (Rini et al. 2007; Skirbekk et al. 2018 as cited in Kiemen, A., 2023).

Another way in which cancer patients are supported is through hospital staff, who can be enabled variously to best be there for patients. “Psychological support skills training for cancer care staff may contribute to improvement in clinical skills as well as improvement in mental wellbeing, work engagement, and burnout” (Malins, S., Boutry, C., Moghaddam, N., etc., 2023).

Although all elements of the human experience can strengthen a person's chance of beating cancer, there is no research to prove that strengthening those other elements will indeed beat cancer because it hasn't been highly researched. Currently, there isn't that much research on peer-to-peer effects on cancer. "Nevertheless, only a few studies are addressing the effectiveness of patients' peer support," (Kiemen, A., 2023). Perhaps the most it will do is make the patient comfortable, but isn't that worth it? Cancer patients struggle with so much, and I think that their comfort should come first. Relationships are a key aspect to life, and while cancer patients are still breathing, I believe that they should still get to feel like they are living life. Furthermore, I believe with more research, we might find that peer support plays a strong role in helping fight cancer as well as making patients comfortable.

The relational aspects of life help a person's mental health, which influences physical well-being. Support from other patients with cancer, hospital staff, friends, and family helps to create strong relational aspects in a person's life. Because of this, cancer patients with strong peer support, can in return have stronger mental health, which strengthens them physically, enabling them to better fight the cancer.

## Works Cited

- Kiemen, A., Czornik, M., & Weis, J. (2023). How effective is peer-to-peer support in cancer patients and survivors? A systematic review. *Journal of Cancer Research and Clinical Oncology*, 149(11), 9461–9485. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00432-023-04753-8>
- Malins, S., Boutry, C., Moghaddam, N., Rathbone, J., Gibbons, F., Mays, C., Brooks, D., & Levene, J. (2023). Outcomes of psychological support skills training for cancer care staff: Skill acquisition, work engagement, mental wellbeing and burnout. *Psycho-Oncology*, 1. <https://doi-org.casper.idm.oclc.org/10.1002/pon.6200>