

Spirituality of Patients and Healthcare Professionals in the Context of Oncology: A Cross-Sectional Study

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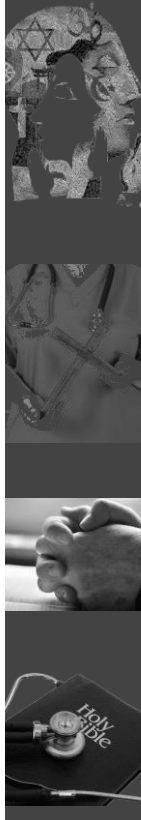
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Introduction

Spirituality is an individual and subjective characteristic that helps in coping with adverse situations, being an important aspect for both patient and health professionals in the oncology context. Considering that the level of spirituality of healthcare professionals interferes in the patients' responses to cancer pain and the suffering generated by the disease, this research aimed to identify the level of spirituality of healthcare professionals and compare it with the level of spirituality of cancer patients with pain, aiming to contribute to pain relief and for positive coping for people facing the illness process.

Material and Methods

This is a quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional study, carried out in a medium-sized hospital, which is a regional reference for cancer treatment, and in an institution to support cancer patients located in a municipality in the south of Bahia. The sample consisted of 49 cancer patients experiencing pain, undergoing treatment through the Unified Health System, and 49 health professionals who work at the studied hospital. To assess the level of spiritual well-being, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale was used, which is composed of the total score (SWB), and two subscales: Religious Well-Being (RWB) and Existential Well-Being (EWB). Categorical variables were compared using the Chi-squared test. The results were considered significant when $p < 0.05$.



Results

Regarding cancer patients, prevailed female (57.1%), mean age of 52.3 years, married/stable union marital status (46.9%) and catholic (42.9%) or evangelical (42.9%). The majority experiences breast cancer (22.4%) and at the moment of the survey application, 25 participants had no defined stage of disease (51.0%). Concerning healthcare professionals, the majority are female (79.6%), nurses (69.4%) and catholic (40.8%). Table 1 shows that there is an association between the variable EWB and the condition of being a patient or a health professional. Thus, it is identified that in the existential dimension a high level of well-being is characteristic of healthcare professionals. In the variables RWB and SWB, there was no statistically significant association, and the results were similar, with patients and healthcare professionals presenting a moderate and high level in RWB and SWB.

Table 1. Association between the spiritual well-being of healthcare professionals and cancer patients.

	RWB			EWB			SWB		
	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High
Patient	1 (100)	6 (42.9)	42 (50.6)	2 (100)	36 (62.1)	11 (28.9)	1 (100)	16 (59.3)	32 (45.7)
Professional	0 (0.0)	8 (57.1)	41 (49.4)	0 (0.0)	22 (37.9)	27 (71.1)	0 (0.0)	11 (40.7)	38 (54.3)
p		0.523			0.002*			0.295	

The majority of patients had high BER, moderate BEE and high EBE. A similar result was found in health professionals: high BER, moderate and high BEE and high EBE. A significant association was found in the variable EWB, indicating that in this dimension, health professionals have a high level of well-being compared to patients ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions

It can be stated that health professionals showed greater spiritual well-being than cancer patients in the EWB. Despite the high spirituality level of the health professionals found in this study, no significant association was identified concerning cancer patients, who also had a high level of spirituality.