Abstract

Background: Cancer patients' family caregivers are exposed to the risk of many physical, psychological, and emotional problems that can negatively affect their quality of life.

Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional study was carried out in 2012 on 105 research samples who were all women members of families due to take care of cancer patients in the city of Sabzevar. The sampling method was based on the objectives and the data collection instrument was the revised translation of a questionnaire that was filled out by the participants (family caregivers) through interviews. The minimum and maximum of the total scores were in a range of 0 to 140, which were later altered to a range of 0 to 100. The obtained data were analyzed with SPSS software version 20 using independent t-tests, analysis of variance, the Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression using a stepwise method.

Findings: The mean age of the research subjects was 36.9 ± 10.9 and the mean total quality of life score was 55.48 ± 10.87. The highest score was obtained for the sub-scale 'lifestyle disorder' with a mean of 66.14 ± 17.31 and the lowest score was related to the sub-scale 'emotional and psychological burden' with a mean of 49.43 ± 18.49. When the caregivers were the patient's sister, their total quality of life score was 4.678 units more than for caregivers who were the patient's daughter. Moreover, the quality of life of patients who did not have any insurance was 5.457 less than those who had insurance.

Conclusion: The emotional and psychological needs of this group of women as informal caregivers should be considered in the educational programs of formal caregivers, especially mental health nurses.

Key words: quality of life, family caregivers, breast cancer