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The influence of support group intervention on health promoting behaviors and quality of life in Thai women with breast cancer during and after treatment

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Abstract

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Thailand. Despite the proliferation of reports in Western countries regarding the effectiveness of cancer support group and the benefit of changing health behaviors after cancer diagnosis in improving health and quality of life (QOL) of people with cancer, no cancer support group studies with an emphasis of health promotion and wellness have been conducted in Thai women with breast cancer. This study aimed to examine the effects of 5-weekly health promotion cancer support groups intervention, with three monthly telephone support on health promoting behaviors and QOL in Thai women with recently diagnosed breast cancer. The final sample consisted of 59 breast cancer women receiving treatment; 29 women were assigned to experimental group and 30 women to control group. Data were collected at three times: baseline prior to the intervention (T1), within two weeks of completion of 5-weekly group sessions (T2), and six months (T3). Research instruments were functional assessment of cancer therapy-breast scale and health promotion lifestyle profile II for assessing QOL and health promoting behaviors respectively. Using repeated measures ANOVA, the results revealed that women in experimental group, compared with those in control group, demonstrated significant improvement of health promoting behaviors and QOL both in short-term (Week 5-7) and long-term effect (6 months). These findings suggest that the health promotion cancer support group may be an efficacious psychosocial intervention for changing health behaviors and improvement of QOL in Thai women with breast cancer during and following treatment.

Keywords: Support group intervention, quality of life, health promoting behaviors, and breast cancer

Biography

Kanaungnit Pongthavornkamol is associate Professor in oncology nursing at the Faculty of Nursing, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand. She has particular interest in stress and coping research in patients with cancer due to her long year experience of clinical teaching in oncology nursing and strong research background in cancer during her Ph.D. at University of Rochester, New York, USA, One of her recent research studies focuses on improving health promoting behaviors and quality of life through cancer support group for Thai women with breast cancer.

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