

Abstract

Determinants of Perceived Social Support in Patients Receiving Oral Anticancer Therapy: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Introduction. Perceived social support plays a central role in the experience of patients with cancer, particularly those receiving oral anticancer therapy, which is largely self-managed at home with limited clinical supervision. Social support may help patients manage treatment-related symptoms and medication adherence while promoting psychological well-being and treatment safety. This study aimed to identify factors associated with perceived social support in adults receiving oral anticancer therapy.

Methods. A cross-sectional study was conducted among adults aged ≥ 18 years who had received oral anticancer therapy for at least three months. Perceived social support was assessed using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. Depressive symptoms were measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9, patient-caregiver mutuality using the Mutuality Scale, and patient-centredness using the Revised Patient Perception of Patient-Centeredness questionnaire. Socioeconomic and clinical variables were also examined. Hypothesis-driven linear regression models were estimated using JASP.

Results. A total of 528 patients were included. The median age was 59 years (interquartile range [IQR], 51–71), 50.8% were women, and the median perceived social support score was 4.58 (IQR, 3.67–5.42). Greater depressive symptoms ($B = -0.051$, $p < .001$), male sex ($B = -0.542$, $p < .001$), and living alone ($B = -0.347$, $p = .030$) were associated with lower perceived social support. Greater mutuality ($B = 0.368$, $p < .001$), better patient-centred care ($B = 0.121$, $p = .032$), having more than one caregiver ($B = 0.620$, $p < .001$), and selected socioeconomic and clinical characteristics were associated with higher perceived social support. The model explained 32% of the variance (adjusted $R^2 = .32$).

Discussion. Perceived social support among patients receiving oral anticancer therapy appears to be influenced primarily by psychological and relational factors. Routine nursing assessment should therefore encompass emotional distress, living arrangements, social resources, and the quality of patient–caregiver relationships. Longitudinal studies are needed to clarify the direction and clinical implications of these associations.

Keywords: Perceived Social Support, Oral Anticancer Therapy, Medication Adherence, Patient-Centred Care, Depression

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