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abstract

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Impact of Structured Pre-Simulation Counselling on Psychological Outcomes in Breast Cancer Patients Undergoing Radiotherapy: A Prospective Pilot Study

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Introduction: Radiotherapy can trigger significant psychological distress in breast cancer patients, potentially impairing compliance and overall treatment experience. Structured pre-simulation counselling may help mitigate anxiety, depression, and stress while enhancing patient satisfaction.

Methodology: A prospective pilot study was conducted at a tertiary care hospital to evaluate the impact of pre-simulation counselling in breast cancer patients scheduled for radiotherapy. Psychological outcomes were assessed using the 21-item Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21), administered before and after counselling. Paired-samples t-tests compared pre- and post-intervention scores. Patient satisfaction was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale.

Results: Nine patients were enrolled. Depression scores decreased significantly following counselling (mean difference = 1.78, $p = 0.035$), while stress scores also showed a significant reduction (mean difference = 5.56, $p = 0.030$). Anxiety scores decreased (mean difference = 2.00) but did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.195$). Satisfaction levels were uniformly positive: 55.6% of patients reported

being satisfied and 44.4% very satisfied, with no reports of dissatisfaction.

Conclusion: Structured pre-simulation counselling significantly reduced depression and stress and was associated with uniformly high satisfaction among breast cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy. Although the reduction in anxiety did not reach statistical significance, the overall findings suggest that counselling interventions may enhance psychological well-being and patient experience. Larger, adequately powered studies are needed to confirm these results and to assess potential effects on adherence, treatment completion, and long-term clinical outcomes.

Conflict of interests: The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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