Factors Predicting Psychological Distress in Patients with Chronic Obstructive Disease

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Abstract

**Purpose:** Psychological distress in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease often results in changes in emotional status, social withdrawal and isolation, and physical symptoms, all of which require increased physical and psychological treatments. This study examined psychological distress in patients with this disease and determined its predicting factors.

**Design:** Correlational predictive study.

**Methods:** The sample consisted of 107 patients recruited from a clinic at the Central Chest Institute of Thailand in Nontaburi Province. Data collection instruments were a demographic characteristics questionnaire, the BODE Index, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, the Cognitive Appraisal of Health Scale, and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression analysis.

**Main findings:** The results showed that most subjects (90.7\%) did not have psychological distress. It was found that cognitive appraisal of health as a threat and as harmful?, and the severity of disease, were positively correlated with psychological distress. Additionally, cognitive appraisal of health as a challenge, and as irrelevant, as well as perceived social support were negatively correlated with psychological distress. Finally, all factors could explain 40\% of the variance in the psychological distress ($R^2 = .40, p < .01$). When controlling for the other variables, the cognitive appraisal of health as harmful ($\beta = .26, p < .05$) and as irrelevant ($\beta = -.25, p < .01$) were the significant predictors of the psychological distress in COPD patients.

**Conclusion and recommendations:** Patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease should be provided with resources to help them reduce their psychological distress. These include: assisting them to have appropriate cognitive appraisals of health, care and treatment to reduce the severity of disease, and information given through various methods.

**Keywords:** chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cognitive appraisal of health, psychological distress, severity of disease, social support