

Effects of a nursing intervention on illness perceptions and quality of life in injured patients: A prospective randomized controlled trial

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ABSTRACT

Background. Illness representations and quality of life are important health outcomes for injured patients. A nursing intervention that utilizes cognitive behavioral therapy skills is increasingly being applied to improve injured patients' outcomes, but there is limited evidence of its effectiveness.

Objectives. This study evaluated the long-term effects of a nursing intervention in changing the illness perceptions and quality of life of injured patients.

Design. A prospective randomized controlled trial was used.

Settings. Data were collected at a medical center in Taiwan.

Participants. Participants were screened through the trauma database of the hospital's computer system. A total of 94 patients were randomly assigned either to the experimental group or the control group.

Methods. Data were collected from 2013 to 2015. Based on a self-regulatory theory, the intervention was conducted by trained nurse practitioners. In recording the outcomes, illness perceptions of injury were measured by the Brief Illness Perception Questionnaire, and quality of life was measured by the World Health Organization's Quality of Life questionnaire. Follow-ups on the experimental and control groups were conducted by telephone to complete the survey at 3, 6, and 12 months after their discharge from the hospital.

Results. The intervention positively changed patients' illness perceptions for "personal control" ($B = 1.26, P < 0.05$) and "treatment control" ($B = 1.50, P < 0.01$) 3 months after being injured, and it changed their "emotional representations" 6 months after being injured. The intervention also positively affected the overall illness perceptions 3 months ($B = -0.60, P < 0.05$) and 6 months ($B = -0.82, P < 0.001$) after the injury. The intervention also promoted the patients' quality of life in the "social domain" 6 months ($B = 1.38, P < 0.01$) and 12 months ($B = 1.38, P < 0.01$) after the injury.

Conclusions. The results indicated the intervention had positively changed the patients' illness representations and quality of life. This study adds new knowledge that proves nursing interventions have longer-term effects on injured patients. A

multidisciplinary care plan and retesting of the intervention protocol are needed in the future.

Keywords: illness perceptions, illness representations, injury, nursing intervention, quality of life.