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Psychological Correlates of Cancer Survival

The purpose was to define psychological variables that support cancer survival. The theoretical approach was based on the cognitive orientation health model (Kreitler & Kreitler) which assumes that the chances for survival are a function of several factors in addition to medical treatment. Psychological factors are one kind of these factors that may promote survival. The methodology of identifying the relevant psychological factors will be described as well as the themes it produced that were summarized in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire of the cognitive orientation of survival included statements referring to beliefs about oneself, about others and reality, about rules and norms and about goals and wishes. The questionnaire was administered to cancer patients with three different diagnoses (breast, melanoma, colorectal) in the first phase of their medical treatment and they were checked again after 5 years and then again after 12 years. The dependent variables in the conducted regression analyses were disease-free survival, metastases, new cancers, no-survival. The results provided information about the relevant psychological correlates of the different kinds of survival.

Biography:

Shulamith Kreitler has graduated in psychology and psychiatry at Bern University, Switzerland. She has been a full professor of psychology at Tel Aviv University since 1986, has worked at the universities of Princeton, Harvard, Yale University, Vienna and Buenos Aires. She is a certified clinical psychologist and health psychologist. She has established the psychooncology unit (Ichilov) and the Center for Psychooncology Research (Sheba Medical Center). She has developed a new approach to meaning, to predicting and changing behavior and identifying psychological risk factors for cancer. She has published over 200 articles and 18 scientific books and is preparing a book about psychooncology (Springer).