


Letter to the Editor

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A commentary on “Spirituality moderates the relationship between cancer caregiver burden and depression” (La. I.S, 2023)

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Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the recent article on “Spirituality moderates the relationship between cancer caregiver burden and depression” (La et al. 2024). This study explores the impact of spirituality on caregiver burden and depression among family caregivers of cancer patients over 6 months. The findings indicated that while caregiver burden, spirituality, and depression levels remained stable, over 30% of caregivers experienced mild-to-severe depressive symptoms. Notably, spirituality had a protective effect, mitigating the relationship between caregiver burden and depression. Caregivers with lower spirituality experienced a stronger link between these burdens, especially concerning schedule, financial burden, and lack of family support.

Given these findings, it is crucial for healthcare providers to recognize the role of spiritual well-being in the holistic care of caregivers, particularly those supporting cancer patients (Mirhosseini et al. 2024; Mithesh and Sheelam 2023). Comprehensive screening for spiritual needs and the inclusion of spiritual care services could be instrumental in improving caregivers’ psychological well-being (Koyu et al. 2024). This integrative approach could also positively influence the overall caregiving experience and, by extension, the health outcomes of care recipients.

The chronic nature of cancer and the intensive caregiving it demands can lead to significant emotional and psychological strain on caregivers. Therefore, integrating spiritual care into the broader framework of healthcare is not just beneficial but essential for fostering a more supportive and resilient caregiving environment.

Comprehensive screening for spiritual needs should be standard practice in caregiver support programs (Nejat et al. 2017). Such screenings can help identify specific spiritual concerns or needs, allowing for tailored interventions that address these aspects. Spiritual care services, which may include counselling (Salley et al. 2024), support groups (Torres-Blasco et al. 2024), mindfulness practices (Türkoğlu and Kavuran 2024), and access to spiritual or religious resources, should be made readily available. These services can offer caregivers a sense of peace, purpose, and connectedness, which are crucial for maintaining psychological well-being.

Moreover, the integration of spiritual care should be considered a core component of holistic care strategies. Holistic care approaches recognize the interconnectedness of physical, emotional, and spiritual health, promoting overall well-being. By addressing spiritual needs alongside other dimensions of health (Cheng et al. 2023), caregivers can experience a more comprehensive support system that acknowledges and values all aspects of their well-being. This integrative approach not only enhances caregivers’ psychological resilience and reduces the risk of depression but also positively influences their caregiving experience. A more resilient caregiver is better equipped to manage the stresses and challenges of caregiving, which can lead to improved care quality for the patient. Consequently, this can have a beneficial impact on the health outcomes of care recipients, creating a supportive cycle where caregiver well-being directly contributes to patient health and recovery.

Competing interests. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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