



Death Anxiety between Caregivers for COVID-19 Patients and Caregivers in Hospice Care

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Background

- Irvin D. Yalom (2003) believes that death is the source of anxiety. When people are faced with the threat or situation of death, death anxiety will follow. This study explored the degree of death anxiety of caregivers having contacted COVID-19 patients (group A), and compared with caregivers for patients in hospice care (group B). The findings can be referred to in the course of counseling and intervention.

Methods

- Through the Chinese version of Revised Death Anxiety Scale (RDAS), the study tested 38 caregivers in group A including doctors and nurses, and 16 caregivers in group B including doctors, nurses, and social workers. The scales also recorded their most concerns. One-way ANOVA was used to analyze the significant difference of the total scores and the three sub-scales ("fear of the process", "loss of autonomy", and "helplessness after death") between two groups.

Results

- Statistics showed that the average total score of group A was significantly higher than that of group B ($p=.046<.05$); however, the three sub-scales indicated that there was a significant difference only in the "helplessness after death" ($p=.011<.05$). Compared with the caregivers' most concerns, the findings coincided with the fact that most caregivers in group A were worried about the possibility of infection to their family.

Conclusions

- According to the results, anxiety of caregivers being at risk of death was higher than those facing a predetermined death; however, the source of anxiety was the risk of infection to caregivers' family members rather than themselves. The reasons might be that Taiwan's successful experience in pandemic control had reduced caregivers' own anxiety, and Chinese people attached more importance to the family than oneself. The result shows the cultural differences.