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Creating stress resilience with integrative health care interventions to IBD patients

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Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) has become a global lifestyle disease. The disease is increasing among young adults in Norway. The following research questions are asked during in-depth interviews with patients: What are IBD patients' experiences with integrative health care? A hermeneutic qualitative research method was used to analyze interviews with patients living with IBD outside hospital. Thirteen young adults between 18 to 45 years of age in calmer phases of IBD participated in the study. Three main themes emerged as results from the analysis of the interviews: (1) Understanding limits in embodied tolerance, (2) Restoring balance is creating a new equilibrium and (3) Creating resilience through integrative care. The use of integrative health care was common among IBD patients attending outpatient clinics in Norway. Dietary change was one important integrative treatment together with homeopathy, acupuncture and physical activity within their tolerance limits. As conclusions anxiety, depression, stress, insomnia and fatigue are known consequences of IBD and create a lower degree of wellbeing for the patients. The digestive system is very important in establishing the interface between the body and the external world. Properly functioning digestion, psychosocial stress reduction and sleep quality are important to rebuild a balanced immune system. Stress resilience during a patient's recovery from IBD requires self-understanding, self-recognition and psychosocial support from health care professions at hospital outpatient clinics. This research intends to contribute to the integrative health care curriculum in nursing and medical education.

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