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Health related quality of life and perceived social support among cancer palliative patients in Saudi Arabia

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Background: Palliative cancer care is becoming a core aspect of care to cancer. Cancer patients are increasingly demanding a multidimensional approach to care including physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual functions. Health Related Quality of life (HRQL) is prominent outcome to these functions. Specifically, in end of life care, patient will require improved quality of life before death through palliative care such as symptoms control, family support and satisfaction as well as patient sense of purpose and meaning. This study aims to describe HRQL, identify factors associated with HRQL physical and mental health domains and explore general perceived social support in cancer palliative patients in Saudi Arabia.

Methods: Validated European Organization for Research and Treatment of Cancer, EORTC QLQ-15 Palliative care scale (Groenvold et al. 2006) and Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS) (Zimet et al.1990) will be used. These instruments are validated in Arabic version and used in previous Arabic population studies. These validated questionnaires were deemed a reliable data collection instrument as it has a track record of being used in similar research. Additional socio-demographic and health status data will be collected such as age, gender, education level, residency area, social status, time of diagnosis and cancer type. Ethical approval is to be granted from hospitals ethics committee before

conducting the study. A convenience sample of 200 adult palliative cancer patients admitted or seen as outpatients in Saudi regional cancer center in Riyadh will be selected. Inclusion and exclusion criteria, questionnaire pack and patient information sheet as well as patient consent will be communicated to adult palliative care unit to assist in the data collection. Data will be collected during 2 -4 months to reach required sample.

Data analysis and results: Collected data will be screened first then scored according to the instrument scoring Modules. Data then will be analyzed through Statistical Package SPSS Software. The results will be reported in tabulation and cross tabulations forms. Descriptive statistics including Mean, standard deviation and range will be displayed. Percentage of HRQL quality of life and perceived social support along with socio-demographic data will be described. Further inferential or multivariate analysis will be carried out as needed.

Discussion and Conclusion: Results will be discussed in relation to relevant existed literature. Contribution of the research in improving quality of life in Saudi cancer palliative patients will be identified. Limitation and further areas for research will be highlighted. Implication for nursing practice will be defined.

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