Self-Efficacy for Management of Symptoms and Symptom Distress in Adults With Cancer: An Integrative Review

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PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION: Self-efficacy for symptom management plays a key role in outcomes, such as quality of life (QOL), functional status, and symptom distress, for adults with cancer. This integrative review identified and assessed evidence regarding self-efficacy for management of symptoms and symptom distress in adults with cancer.

LITERATURE SEARCH: The authors performed a search of literature published from 2006–2018, and articles that examined the relationship among self-reported self-efficacy, symptom management, symptom distress or frequency, and severity in adults with cancer were selected for inclusion.

DATA EVALUATION: 22 articles met the inclusion criteria. All articles were critically appraised and met standards for methodologic quality.

SYNTHESIS: Evidence from this review showed that high self-efficacy was associated with low symptom occurrence and symptom distress and higher general health and QOL. High self-efficacy predicted physical and emotional well-being. Low self-efficacy was associated with higher symptom severity, poorer outcomes, and better overall functioning.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH: Self-efficacy can be assessed using developed instruments. Presence of a theoretical model and validated instruments to measure self-efficacy for symptom management have set the groundwork for ongoing research.

KEYWORDS self-efficacy; symptom management; integrative review; symptom distress; cancer

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