Personality Trait and Quality of Life in Colorectal Cancer Survivors

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Colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer globally, and its prevalence is increasing in Asia (Yee et al., 2009). In Taiwan, colorectal cancer is the third most frequent cause of cancer-related deaths, accounting for 4,531 deaths in 2009 (Department of Health, Executive Yuan, R.O.C., 2011). However, with advances in early detection and treatment, the five-year survival rate for all stages of colorectal cancer has risen to 60% (Denlinger & Barsevick, 2009). Therefore, colorectal cancer has become a curable illness with a rapidly growing number of survivors (Denlinger & Barsevick, 2009; Faul, Shibata, Townsend, & Jacobsen, 2010).

Colorectal cancer survivors frequently experience gastrointestinal symptom distress, depression, and negative body image for as long as three years following diagnosis (Denlinger & Barsevick, 2009; Phipps, Braitman, Stites, & Leighton, 2008; Schneider et al., 2007). Although considerable research has demonstrated that disease-related factors (Shun et al., 2008), other physical factors (e.g., symptom distress, fatigue) (So et al., 2009), and psychological distress (e.g., depression, anxiety) (Bellizzi, Latini, Cowan, DuChane, & Carroll, 2008; Llewellyn, McGurk, & Weinman, 2005; Reich, Lesur, & Perdrizet-Chevallier, 2008) can be associated with quality of life (QOL) in patients with cancer, much less research has focused on QOL in cancer survivors (Ayanian & Jacobsen, 2006; Aziz, 2007).

Studies conducted since 2000 have reported that personality can be significantly related to QOL (Hartl et al., 2010; Michielsen, Van der Steeg, Roukema, & De Vries, 2007). The personality known as type D has been found to be an independent predictor of poor health status and impaired QOL among cardiovascular patients (Denollet, Pedersen, Vrints, & Conraads, 2006; Pedersen, Herrmann-Lingen, de Jonge, & Scherer, 2010; Pelle, Pedersen, Szabo, & Denollet, 2009) and melanoma survivors (Mols & Denollet, 2010a). Type D is associated with two personality traits: negative affectivity and social inhibition (Denollet et al., 2006; Ferguson et al., 2009). Negative affectivity indicates the tendency