The Relationship of Sleep Disturbance and Symptom Severity, Symptom Interference, and Hospitalization Among Israeli Inpatients With Cancer

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Sleep disturbance is a common issue among patients with cancer (Berger et al., 2005; Savard & Morin, 2001; Sela, Watanabe, & Nekolaichuk, 2005) and has been reported as one of the most frequent symptoms among patients with breast (Byar, Berger, Bakken, & Cetak, 2006; Davidson, MacLean, Brundage, & Schulze, 2002) or lung cancer (Davidson et al., 2002; Wang, Tsai, Chen, Lin, & Lin, 2008), as well as patients with cancer in general (Ivanova et al., 2005; Yi, Wang, & Ping-Ping, 2008). In addition, insomnia has been reported as the most prominent symptom of hospitalized patients with cancer (Chen & Chang, 2004). Furlani and Ceolim’s (2006) study showed that hospitalized, clinically stable patients with gynecologic or breast cancer experienced better sleep quality during hospitalization. Patients whose situation deteriorated did not sleep as well. Other studies indicated that patients undergoing stem cell transplantation (Anderson et al., 2007; Rischer, Scherwath, Zander, Koch, & Schulz-Kindermann, 2009) and those on a neurosurgical unit (Sendir, Acaroglu, Kaya, Erol, & Akkaya, 2007; Ugras & Oztekin, 2007) experienced more sleeping issues during the period of treatment with improvements occurring toward the end of hospitalization. No in-depth published studies were found that examined the nature of Israeli patients’ sleep disturbance in an inpatient setting, nor has their sleep disturbance at home been compared with their sleep disturbance in the hospital.

Research studies have demonstrated that sleep disturbance occurs in a cluster with other symptoms (Given, Given, Sikorskii, & Hadar, 2007). Studies that have examined the symptom cluster of fatigue, depression, pain, and sleep disturbance featured sleep disturbance scores as the highest in two of the four patient subgroups, and second to the highest in the other two subgroups, and second to the highest in the other two.