

Conference abstract

## **Benefits and challenges perceived by patients with cancer when offered a nurse navigator; a qualitative study**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** To explore the experiences of patients with cancer who were offered a nurse navigator in their course of illness before the in-hospital period.

**Theory:** Development has fragmented healthcare systems in many countries, and coherence is now desired. Among interventions suggested to reduce the fragmentation and improve delivery of care are help from patient navigators, where patients are offered extra help in a defined area by e.g., a nurse [nurse navigator (NN)]. Patients' experiences are of major interest, but have seldom been thoroughly investigated.

**Methods:** A phenomenological-hermeneutical longitudinal study was performed among Danish gynecological patients from before an in-hospital period to two months after discharge. NN offered extra information, coordination, logistic services and emotional talk. Semi-structured interviews provided data to the primarily open-minded analysis.

**Results:** Not all could use the help from NN. Those who could, attached affectional bonds to NN and experienced benefit from her presence as well as her help. Many had a feeling of deep-felt disappointment and felt rejected when the contact to NN stopped.

**Conclusion:** Resources for NN should be prioritized to patients who can use the help, and not stop prematurely. The traditional division and thinking by healthcare professionals are challenged, if all patients should be helped.

### **Keywords**

**care coordination, nurse navigator, qualitative study, patient experiences**

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