



## A study of perceived social support, life satisfaction and hope among chronically ill patients

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### Abstract

Patients with chronic illness require great social support and efficient caregivers. They tend to develop psychological distress, anxiety issues, stress and eventually their quality of life and satisfaction with life deteriorates. Hope is a positive factor which helps patients with chronic illness to fight with such adversity and stressors. The current investigation was designed to study the interrelationship between perceived social support, life satisfaction and hope among chronically ill patients. The sample for the current investigation consisted of 50 chronically ill patients (where 25 are male patients and 25 are female patients) in the age group of 35-45 years in the tricity of Panchkula, Mohali and Chandigarh. For this purpose, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet *et al.*, 1988), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener *et al.*, 1985) and Adult Hope Scale (Snyder *et al.*, 1991) were administered to the sample. Inter-correlational analysis was used for statistical analysis. Results were discussed in terms of its implications.

**Keywords:** perceived social support, life satisfaction, hope, chronically ill patients

### Introduction

A chronic illness is a human health condition or disease that is persistent or otherwise long-lasting in its effects or a disease that comes with time. According to a report from the WHO (World Health Organization 2005), chronic illness has been a major challenge for healthcare systems. The report explains that chronic illness is the leading cause of disability and mortality world-wide accumulating to approximately 63 % of all deaths and 43 % of the global burden of disease. It is estimated that half of all currently required healthcare worldwide is due to chronic illness and that the burden of such care will increase. Chronic illnesses account for more or less 47 % of the total burden of illness in the eastern Mediterranean region and 80 % of all deaths in low and middle-income countries worldwide (World Health Organization 2005).

### Perceived Social Support

Perceived social support can be defined as being helped when needed, being loved and getting respect and interest (Baser, 2006) <sup>[2]</sup>, is the individual's cognitive perception that he/she has reliable ties with others and he/she will receive support (Kozakli, 2006) <sup>[9]</sup>. Scarcity or lack of social support is an important determinant of unhealthy behaviors like use of drugs, committing crimes, etc. (Mason, 2004) <sup>[13]</sup>. In children and adolescents, especially the received social support and perceived social support from friends is related to the feeling of a sense of belongingness, and the scarcity of support may cause hostility, despair and loneliness (Manfusa, 2001; Lagana, 2004) <sup>[11, 10]</sup>.

### Life Satisfaction

Ruut Veenhoven (1991) <sup>[24]</sup> has best summarized Life

Satisfaction; "Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole. Life-satisfaction is one of the pointers of 'apparent' quality of life along with other indicators of mental and physical health. It is assumed that the less the incongruity between the individual's desires and achievements, the more life satisfaction one has (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003) <sup>[4]</sup>. Life satisfaction is assessed as the degree of the positive emotions experienced (Simsek, 2011) <sup>[19]</sup>.

### Hope

Hope is future-oriented and described as a feeling, an emotion, an experience, a need and a dynamic attribute. Hope is an emotion rooted in early trust experiences and influenced by external and collaborative control beliefs (Scioli *et al.*, 1997) <sup>[18]</sup>. Snyder *et al.* (1991) <sup>[20]</sup> used goal concepts to propose two major, interrelated cognitive elements of hope within a goal-setting framework. First, they contend that hope is fuelled by the perception of successful agency related to goal. The agency component refers to a sense of successful determination in meeting goals in the past, present, and future. Second, they contend that hope is influenced by the perceived availability of successful pathways related to goals. The pathways component refers to a sense of being able to generate successful plans to meet goals.

### Hypotheses

1. It is expected that there will be a positive relationship between perceived social support and life satisfaction.
2. It is expected that there will be positive relationship between hope and life satisfaction.
3. It is expected that there will be a positive relationship between perceived social support and hope.

## Methodology

### Sample

The sample for the current investigation comprised of 50 chronically ill patients, who were further divided on the basis of gender, that is, 25 were male patients and 25 were female patients. The age group of the sample was 35-45 years. The sample was collected from the hospitals of tricity of Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali.

### Test and Tools

For this purpose, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet *et al.*, 1988) [28], Satisfaction with Life

Scale (Diener *et al.*, 1985) [3] and Adult Hope Scale (Snyder *et al.*, 1991) [21] were administered to the sample.

### Statistical Analysis

Keeping in mind the purpose of the current investigation which was to study the interrelationship between perceived social support, life satisfaction and hope among chronically ill patients; inter-correlational analysis was used. Combined data of male patients and female patients were taken, gender differences were not taken into consideration for this investigation.

## Results

**Table 1:** shows the inter-correlation matrix between perceived social support, life satisfaction and hope among chronically ill patients (N = 50).

	Perceived Social Support	Life Satisfaction	Hope
Perceived social support	—	0.49**	0.46**
Life satisfaction		—	0.41**
Hope			—

\*\*significant at 0.01 level (df =48)

## Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to study the interrelationship between perceived social support, life satisfaction and hope in chronically ill patients. Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be a positive relationship between perceived social support and life satisfaction. Significant results were found as the correlation coefficient comes out to be 0.49 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted. The findings of this study are in line with the hypothesis stated above. Researchers have assessed the quality of life and life satisfaction on various psychological, clinical, and socio demographic variables among persons with psychiatric disorder are related with the social support one receives (Ritsner *et al.*, 2000) [16]. It is reported that in addition to severity of symptoms, family support and friendship appear to be a predictor of life satisfaction (Spiridonow *et al.*, 2002) [22]. Perceived support from friend and staff are found to predict individual's overall life satisfaction (Meeks & Murell, 1994) [14]. Even though few studies have analyzed life satisfaction in this chronic disease, a positive association between perceived social support and life satisfaction has been found in female chronically ill patients (Friedman & King, 1994) [7]. Social support is a protective factor for all subjects, positively related to life satisfaction (Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996) [23].

Positively perceived social support is associated to benefits (Frasure-Smith *et al.*, 2000) [6] resulting in high life satisfaction (Everson-Rose & Lewis, 2005; Montero, Rueda, & Bermúdez, 2012; Pérez-García *et al.*, 2011) [5, 15] during the course of chronic diseases.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be a positive relationship between hope and life satisfaction. The correlation coefficient comes out to be 0.41 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Hope gives rise to a sense of well-being. It is a key factor in acquiring a state of optimal health, an essential positive phenomenon necessary for healthy coping and life satisfaction (Zhou, Yang, & Xie, 2008) [27].

Healthcare professionals play a significant role in enhancing hope, eventually enhancing life satisfaction among colostomy patients (Nutter, 2008). There is a significant relationship between spiritual well-being, hope and life satisfaction in patients suffering from cancer. This finding is consistent with the results of previous researches (Yoon, 2006; Snyder, *et al.* 2002; Mascaro, *et al.* 2004) [25, 21, [12]].

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be a positive relationship between perceived social support and hope. The correlation coefficient comes out to be 0.46 which is significant at 0.01 level. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is accepted. Herth (1990) [8] examined hope-fostering strategies and found a relationship between perceived social support and hope. Specific ways of being in relationships with others include dealing with one's family, renegotiating the friendship group, helping others with chronically ill diseases and developing a relationship with a higher power, and in this case, social support act as the functional component of relationships, such as emotional and tangible assistance (Barroso, 1997) [1]. Thus, there is a positive relationship between perceived social support and hope (Zhang *et al.*, 2010) [26].

## Conclusion

A chronically ill patient undergoes a lot of anxiety and stress. They are able to cope up well with their disease if they have a good social support of family and friends. This, in turn, leads to a healthy quality of life and life satisfaction in such patients. Hope is an enduring trait that aids them in living a contented life and reduces distress. Proper hope-fostering modules should be implemented, effective caregivers and social support givers should be there to assist the chronically ill patients. This will eventually lead to an increase in the life satisfaction of chronically ill patients.

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