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TITLE: Emotional Expression and Psychological Adjustment to
Prostate Cancer: A Brief Intervention for Patients and
Their Partners

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Introduction

The current study examines the effects of a psychological intervention that encourages emotional expression in prostate cancer patients and their partners. Prostate cancer patients (n=130) and their partners are randomly assigned to an intervention or a control group. Following Pennebaker's model, subjects in the intervention group are asked to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings regarding their cancer experience for 20 minutes each day for three consecutive days. The control group is asked to write about trivial non-emotional topics. Outcome variables including psychological distress, quality of life, and physical symptoms will be assessed at baseline and over a period of nine months after the intervention (one week, three, six, and nine months).

Body

Task 1: Preparation for the study (month 1 to 2):

The research protocols have been developed including instructions for all aspects of the protocol and questionnaire packets for each assessment. Research assistants have been trained to administer all parts of the protocol including the intervention, all assessments, and debriefings.

Task 2: Data collection (month 1 to 34):

Collaborating physicians are referring research subjects on an ongoing basis. Currently 15 subjects have completed the entire protocol including the intervention and all follow-up assessments. A further 37 subjects are enrolled in the study and are at various stages of the research protocol. We have recently obtained an additional 150 referrals from a collaborator which will increase our accrual rate in the next few months to meet our annual goals. Weekly research meetings are in place to deal with the day to day running of the project.

Task 3: Data processing (month 6 to 34):

Data spreadsheets have been set up and all data currently collected have been entered. Data verification is conducted periodically to ensure accuracy of data processing. SPSS programs have been set up for data analyses.

Task 4: Data analyses (month 34-36):

No results are available yet. Data analyses would not be informative at this stage of the research process.

Key Research Accomplishments

- Research protocol and referral mechanisms are in place.
- A total of 51 subjects are enrolled in the study.
- An additional 150 new referrals are being screened for eligibility.
- Data entry and verification is conducted on an ongoing basis.
- Weekly research meetings are conducted.

Reportable Outcomes

No reportable outcomes are available so far. This is in line with expectations delineated in our Statement of Work.

Conclusions

The research protocol is running as planned and no modifications are necessary at this point.