Nursing expertise in breast cancer care: a systematic review on the effectiveness of specialised nurse interventions

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Abstract

To date there are no services in hospitals of the German speaking parts of Switzerland that offer continuous and specialist nursing care in oncology. This systematic literature review aims at providing an overview of the effectiveness of such interventions by specialist nurses for women with breast cancer. It should also inform the conceptualisation of new specialist nurse interventions in practice as well as indicate future research areas in this domain. Drawing on a database search, the review includes fifteen studies among which studies in German could not be taken into account. The studies included in the investigation differ in terms of the underlying concept of specialist nurse interventions as well as at the level of measured outcome variables. Comparability is limited. Overall, the review indicates that specialist nurse interventions can contribute to improving physical and psycho-social well-being in women with breast cancer. However, the review identifies both the need for a uniform definition of specialist nurse education and intervention in breast cancer care as well as the need for rigorous and confirmatory studies to evaluate their effectiveness - in order to provide a more reliable basis for future health care strategies.
A nurse is a nurse? A systematic review of the effectiveness of specialised nursing in breast cancer.

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Abstract
The effectiveness of specialised nursing in breast cancer has received limited attention. This systematic literature review aims at (i) presenting and discussing role models of specialised nursing in the area of breast cancer and (ii) suggesting avenues for future research in this field. The ten studies included in the review differ with respect to the roles of specialised nurses as well as the measured outcome variables; thus, the comparability and generalisability of results are limited. Nevertheless, the review indicates that specialised nursing in breast cancer may contribute to improved physical and psycho-social well-being. In view of the limited comparability, the authors call for (i) a more uniform definition of models of specialised nursing in breast cancer care, as well as (ii) rigorous confirmatory studies to evaluate their effectiveness. These two aspects are pivotal in providing a reliable basis for future health care strategies.