

ORIGINAL PAPER

Day by Day, Moment by Moment – the Meaning of the Caring Encounter

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Abstract

Background: For women diagnosed with breast cancer today's streamlined care entails brief encounters with caregivers where increasingly more and more issues need to be taken care of. This is why it is important to investigate how these short encounters can become caring and supportive for patients.

Aims: The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the prerequisites for and the meaning of the caring encounter in the care of women with breast cancer.

Methodology: Secondary analysis was performed using hermeneutic text interpretation according to Ricoeur.

Results: Promises of encounters, trust that bears from day to day, moments of time together – giving time, receiving time and having time – being allowed to be a human being and a patient from one moment to the next are prerequisites for a caring encounter in this context. The promise of future encounters and trust in the caregivers' expert knowledge make it possible for the woman to safely surrender her body to the caregivers. When the woman is allowed to be both patient and human being she can to a greater extent be herself in her changed body.

Conclusions: In a caring encounter, mutual time is created between caregiver and patient, between human beings. This time is a timeless moment that exists on a deeper level. In this moment, the woman gains the insight to live day by day, moment by moment, which, in this context, becomes the most important message and meaning of the encounter.

Key words: Breast cancer, caring encounter, secondary analysis, hermeneutic text interpretation