

Meaning-centered group therapy beneficial in advanced cancer

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Meaning-centered group psychotherapy is effective for reducing psychological distress and improving spiritual well-being in patients with advanced cancer, according to a study published online Feb. 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

(HealthDay)—Meaning-centered group psychotherapy (MCGP) is effective for reducing psychological distress and improving spiritual well-being in patients with advanced cancer, according to a study published online Feb. 2 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

William Breitbart, M.D., from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, and colleagues examined the efficacy of MCGP to reduce [psychological distress](#) and improve spiritual well-being among 253 patients with [advanced cancer](#). Participants were randomized to manualized eight-session interventions of MCGP or supportive group psychotherapy (SGP). Patients were assessed for spiritual well-being and

overall quality of life as well as secondary outcome measures before and after completing treatment and at two months after treatment.

The researchers found that for participants who attended three or more sessions there was a significant group \times time interaction for most outcome variables in models that included a priori covariates. Compared with patients receiving SGP, those receiving MCGP showed significantly greater improvement in spiritual well-being and quality of life, and significantly greater decreases in depression, hopelessness, desire for hastened death, and physical symptom distress. There were no between-group differences for changes in anxiety. Significant treatment effects were seen for quality of life, depression, and hopelessness in analyses that included all patients (intention-to-treat analyses) and no covariates.

"This large randomized controlled study provides strong support for the efficacy of MCGP as a treatment for psychological and existential or [spiritual distress](#) in patients with advanced cancer," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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