

Assessing the Effectiveness of Prayer for Pre-Operative Cardio-Thoracic Patients

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ABSTRACT

Introduction and background: Prayer is an act of communication by humans with the supernatural power. Human tendency is to be afraid and anxious about the upcoming surgery, which has an effect on the blood pressure; the surgeons find it difficult to proceed. A merry heart is responsible for the major healing process.

Methods: This study was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of prayer for pre-operative cardio-thoracic participants. It was limited only to the cardio-thoracic participants admitted in the wards of a selected multi-specialty hospital in Vellore Dist. Tamilnadu. Participants between the age group 31 and 70 yrs, irrespective of any gender, single or married who can speak Tamil/English and is pre-operative for at least 3 days were included. A standardized tool consisting of 10 items was administered using Questionnaire method. Participants were expected to rate them according to how much they have been benefitted. A sample size of 10 was conveniently recruited. The investigator conducted 3 sessions prior to the day of surgery. Assessment was carried on, focusing on evaluating the spiritual coping starting with prayer. The interview with the participant took place at the bedside of the ward.

Results: 60% of the participants had their fear absolutely reduced after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 70% of the participants had their anxiety absolutely reduced after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 60% of the participants were absolutely confident after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 70% of the participants were able to feel close to God completely. 70% of the participants were mentally prepared to face the surgery. 70% of the participants were able to feel God's presence completely. 80% of the participants absolutely gained faith upon God. 40% of the participants were able to completely cope emotionally. 70% of the participants were fully benefitted by the pastoral care giver's prayer.

Conclusion: The participants gained faith upon God and had the real experience of feeling the presence of God at the bedside. Prayer helped the participant to cope emotionally and to have a hope for the future. This study revealed that the pastoral care giver's prayer was effective by making a significant difference in their coping pattern.

Keywords: Prayer, Cardio-thoracic, Pastoral care

INTRODUCTION

Cardio-thoracic surgeries are major surgical procedures that are carried out for participants who have heart as well as lung problems. The most common cardio-thoracic surgery is CABG (Coronary Artery Bypass Graft), which is literally called as 'Bypass surgery'. Other cardio-thoracic surgeries include Mitral Valve Replacement (MVR), and Septal Defect correction surgeries, mainly for children. These surgeries are

major surgeries which involves the cutting of the chest bone (sternum) and the gaining entrance to the heart. In most of the case, the 'Heart-Lung machine' is used i.e., a mechanical device temporarily does the work of the pumping of the heart. It might involve temporary slowing down of the heart. Therefore, it is time consuming surgical procedure which is a threat to participants who know about it as well as for those participants who are clueless about it. Thus, they need pastoral care to strengthen them to boldly face the upcoming surgery.

There are several factors that contribute to the participant's fear and anxiety. The participant's relatives struggle to arrange 4 units of blood prior to the surgery. The Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Fund sanctioning also matters for the participant. All these things increase the participant's worries. Therefore, there is natural fear and anxiety rooted deep down in the hearts of the participants. Here is where, the Pastoral Care Giver's assistance is needed. Praying along with the participant will have a direct impact on his attitude and emotional status.

Prayer is the most important act of all religions. It is considered the gateway to reach god's presence in order to have a divine connection with Him. 'Prayer brings victory'. We believe that prayer really works in all situations. Prayer is a medium by which man is able to communicate to the Almighty God and He is always listening to our prayers.

Many poor participants suffered financially and lost hope about paying their huge bills. The investigator really wanted to help them in some or the other way. They needed a person to share all their feelings. Those participants were able to freely speak to the investigator about the present problems they were facing. Many of them requested the investigator to pray for them, that God would intervene and heal them. As a Pastoral care giver, and a counselor, the investigator prayed with them sincerely. The pastoral care giver promised them that he would continue to pray for them in the future. In the consecutive days, the pastoral care giver re-visited them and enquired whether they improved. The investigator ensured that they improved. He also ensured that they were confident enough to face the cardio-thoracic surgery that their fear and anxiety levels came down.

The investigator insisted them to pray along with him when they were at their bedside. Many participants got improved in their emotional status and requested him to pray again and again. The investigator was able to understand that prayer was working in their lives, and showed a remarkable improvement. Thereby their faith upon Jesus Christ eventually increased. Though many of them were non-Christians, they believed in prayer. Many participants were able to sleep normally and peacefully after praying. Their fear and anxiety, doubts, confusion levels decreases and hope on God increased eventually.

This study was aimed at assessing the effectiveness of prayer for pre-operative cardio-thoracic participants, with the objectives to reduce fear and anxiety from the participant through prayer, to prepare the participants to boldly face the surgery, to assess whether the participant has improved in his emotional status, to analyze whether the participant has gained faith upon God and to assess whether the participant is really benefitted by the Pastoral Care Giver's prayer and concern over the participant.

The materials for this study were collected from various resources from Chaplaincy library, internet databases, periodicals etc. The pastoral care giver being a nursing graduate had to depend upon some of the nursing literature which speaks about spirituality in health care.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design

Quantitative, descriptive study design was chosen for this study

Limitations

It was limited only to the cardio-thoracic patients admitted in the wards of a selected multi-specialty hospital in Vellore Dist. Tamilnadu.

Sample size

A sample size of 10 patients were conveniently recruited. Patients between the age group 31 and 70 yrs, irrespective of any gender, single or married who can speak Tamil/English and was admitted pre-operatively for at least 3 days were included.

Study setting

The conversation with the participants took place at the bedside in the ward.

Procedure and tool for data collection

A standardized tool in the form of a questionnaire, containing 10 items were administered. The investigator conducted 3 sessions prior to the day of surgery. In the first session, good rapport was established, pastoral care was provided and prayer was offered. In the second session, the investigator enquired about the participant and prayed. The final session started with prayer, an assessment was carried on, focusing on evaluating the spiritual coping. Participants were expected to rate the intervention according to how much they have been benefitted. They scored accordingly i.e., 1, 2, 3. 1=least effective, 2=moderately effective, 3=most effective.

Ethical consideration

Human rights were preserved. Informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study and adequate permissions were acquired.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using measures of central tendency like mean, median mode.

RESULTS

Table: 1 Q-1. How much are you satisfied after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	4	40%
3	Most	6	60%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 1, it is understood that 40% of the participants were moderately satisfied by the pastoral care giver praying for them. 60% of the participants were fully satisfied by the pastoral care giver's prayer. It is significant that none of the participants were least satisfied by the pastoral care giver's prayer.

Table: 2 Q-2. How much is your fear reduced after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	1	10%
2	Moderate	3	30%
3	Most	6	60%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 2, it is understood that 30% of the participants had their fear moderately reduced after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 60% of the participants had their fear absolutely reduced

after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. It is significant that 10% of the participant’s fear was reduced by the pastoral care giver’s prayer.

Table: 3 Q-3. How much is your anxiety level reduced after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	3	30%
3	Most	7	70%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 3, it is understood that 30% of the participants had their anxiety moderately reduced after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 70% of the participants had their anxiety absolutely reduced after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. It is significant that the pastoral care giver’s prayer was effective for all 10 participants with regard to reduction of anxiety.

Table: 4 Q-4. How much are you confident after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	1	10%
2	Moderate	3	30%
3	Most	6	60%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 3, it is noted that 30% of the participants were confident moderately after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. 60% of the participants were absolutely confident after the pastoral care giver prayed for them. It is significant that after the pastoral care giver prayed for them, 10% of the participants were least confident to face the surgery.

Table: 5 Q-5. How much are you feeling close to God after the prayer you made?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	3	30%
3	Most	7	70%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 5, it is understood that, 70% of the participants were able to feel close to God completely and 30% of the participants were able to feel close to God. All most all participants were benefitted.

Table: 6 Q-6. How much are you prepared to face the surgery?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	7	70%
3	Most	3	30%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 6, it is understood that, 70% of the participants were prepared to face the surgery and 30% of the participants were fully prepared to face the surgery. All most all participants were benefitted.

Table: 7 Q-7. How much are you feeling God’s presence after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	2	20%
2	Moderate	1	10%
3	Most	7	70%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 7, it is understood that, 70% of the participants were able to feel God’s presence completely and 10% of the participants were able to feel God’s presence moderately. 20% of the participants were able to feel God’s presence minimally.

Table: 8 Q-8. How much have you gained faith upon God after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	2	20%
3	Most	8	80%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 8, it is understood that 80% of the participants have absolutely gained faith upon God and 20% of the participants have moderately gained faith upon God. Almost all of them have been benefitted by the pastoral care giver’s prayer for them.

Table: 9 Q-9. How much are you coping emotionally after the Pastoral care giver prayed for you?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	1	10%
2	Moderate	5	50%
3	Most	4	40%
Total		10	100%

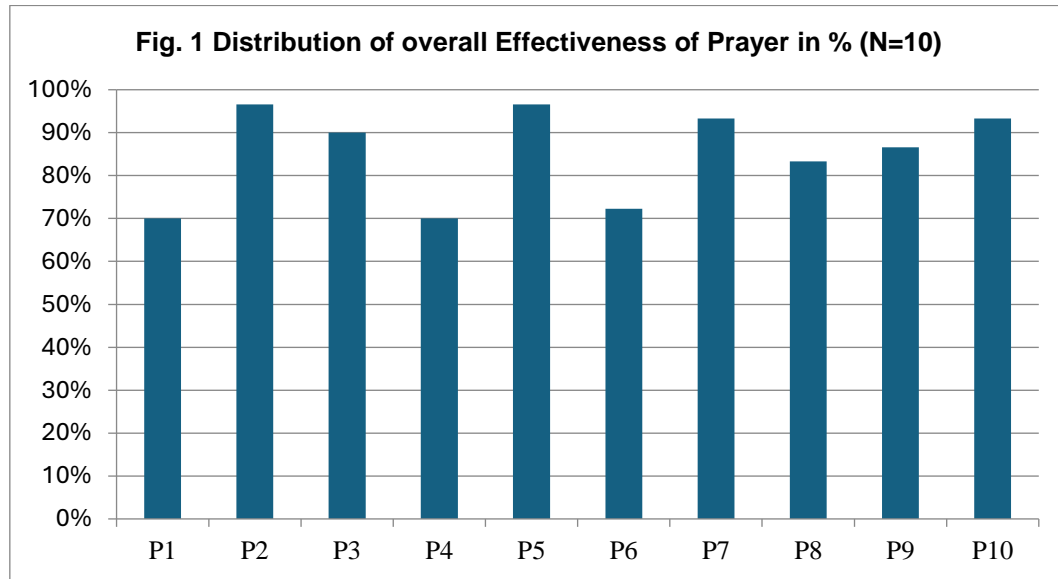
From the above table: 9, it is understood that, 40% of the participants were able to completely cope emotionally. 50% of the participants were able to moderately cope emotionally. 10% of the participants were able to minimally cope emotionally.

Table: 10 Q-10. How much are you benefitted by the Pastoral care giver’s prayer?

S. No	Option given	No. of scores obtained	Percentage
1	Least	0	0%
2	Moderate	3	30%

3	Most	7	70%
Total		10	100%

From the above table: 10, it is understood that 30% of the participants were moderately benefitted by the pastoral care giver praying for them. 70% of the participants were fully benefitted by the pastoral care giver’s prayer. It is significant that none of the participants were least benefitted by the pastoral care giver’s prayer.



In the above fig.1, effectiveness of prayer is represented in percentage with reference to the participant. The maximum score is 29/30 which gives a percentage of 96.6%; it has been achieved by participants P2 and P5. The minimum score is 21/30 which gives a percentage of 70%; it has been achieved by participants P1 and P4. Prayer has been 90% effective for participant P3 and the score is 27/30. P6 has achieved a score of 22/30 which yields a percentage of 73.3%. P7, P8, P9, P10 has got the following scores 28/30, 25/30, 26/30, 28/30 which is calculated into 93.3%, 83.3%, 86.6%, and 93.3%.

CONCLUSION

Prayer has made an impact in the wellbeing of the participants. As far as this study is concerned, the participant has gained faith upon God and had the real experience of feeling the presence of God at the bedside. Prayer has helped the participant to cope emotionally and to have a hope for the future. They believed that there would be a smooth recovery. It is quite natural that every human being has some or the other fear and anxiety embedded in the heart with regard to the upcoming surgery, thus prayer and intercession has given rise to an internal drive that reduces stress and to feel at ease. This study reveals that the pastoral care giver’s visit has made a difference in their spiritual coping pattern.

In some participants, the prayer has been moderately effective with regard to their fear and anxiety. But most of them were able to cope positively and they were benefitted absolutely. At the end of the study, the pastoral care giver’s prayer has been effective by 85.3% overall. Most of the participants were satisfied by the pastoral care giver’s visit and prayer in a very special way.

This study has been a great help for the pastoral care giver in his healing ministry to the participants. It has been an eye opener to understand the hopelessness that prevails among the pre-operative participants,

which deteriorates their wellbeing. Sickness not only comprises the physical ailment, but also includes the external factors that are predominant. Thus, it is the pastoral care giver's responsibility to address to these needs in a peculiar way by prayer and intercession. This study has enabled the pastoral care giver to know whether his ministry to the participant has been a good use. In the future, spiritual sessions of strengthening faith should be conducted for the participants, so that their hope and faith will increase and the physical and emotional preparedness will be induced.

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