

## **Bereavement Risk Assessment of Family Caregivers of Patients with Cancer: Relationship between Bereavement Risk and Post-Loss Psychological Distress**

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**Abstract :** In this study, we assessed the bereavement risk of family caregivers of patients with cancer. In the palliative care unit of Tohoku University Hospital, we conducted a family psychoeducation session to support the family caregivers of patients with cancer. A total of 50 participants (8 males and 42 females; mean age = 62.98 years, SD = 11.10) were assessed after the session for bereavement risk using the Japanese version of the Bereavement Risk Assessment Tool (BRAT-J). According to the BRAT-J scores, eight participants were considered to be having no known risk (Level 1), seventeen had minimal risk (Level 2), twenty had a low risk (Level 3), four had a moderate risk (Level 4), and one had a high risk (Level 5). Of these participants, seven participants had completed the follow-up postal survey that assessed their psychological distress (the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale: K6) to compare the bereavement risk. According to the K6 scores, three-fourth of the individuals, who were considered to be at Level 3 on the BRAT-J, scored higher than the cutoff point (>10) for the detection of depressive disorder. On the other hand, one-third of the individuals, who were considered to be at Level 2 on the BRAT-J, scored higher than the cutoff point. Therefore, it appears that the BRAT-J can predict the likelihood of difficulties or complications in bereaved family caregivers. This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine and Tohoku University Hospital.

**Keywords :** palliative care, family caregivers, bereavement risk, BRAT, post-loss psychological distress

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