

ABSTRACT

Studies have revealed prevalence of presurgical anxiety in general as well as colorectal cancer patients. The available presurgical intervention techniques as a whole have demonstrated moderate effect sizes on various post-surgical outcomes. However, there is a lack of well-studied cognitive interventions and virtually no studies have been done on cognitive presurgical interventions for colorectal cancer patients in Hong Kong. The present pilot study aimed to derive and validate a new cognitive technique driven by the theoretical literature on anxiety, threat and coping. Twenty patients with impending surgery for colorectal cancer in a local hospital were randomly assigned to either experimental group (n=10) or attention control group (n=10). The experimental group received the new cognitive technique plus a handout on guided imagery. The control group received placebo attention plus the same handout on guided imagery. Baseline and outcome measures, including state anxiety, pain, perceived threat and coping of the surgery and the disease, quality of life, length of stay and satisfaction with hospital care, were measured in four different time points before and after surgery. Results of repeated measures analysis of variance were largely non-significant, except that the experimental group deteriorated while control group improved on social well-being 3 days after surgery. Possible reasons for the results were discussed in light of modifications for continuation of the study of this technique. Directions for further study were also recommended.