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- Loss of sense of fulfillment and meaning in life -

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Abstract

AIM: To analyze responses to the question "How has your life changed significantly following the death of your spouse?"

METHODOLOGY: A qualitative induction analysis was performed on data (oral and writing questionnaire) collected at the Grief Care meetings.

SUBJECTS: Of 105 participants who had attended the previous meetings, 18 subjects (average 58.4 year-old, 7 males, 11 females) were selected who had suffered bereavement (loss of spouse). Further conditions were (a) at least one year had passed since spouse's death, and (b) subjects were childless or that their child/ children had completed basic elementary school education (i.e., 12 years of age).

Ethical considerations : Approved by University's Committee.

RESULT and DISCUSSION: Results suggested divisions into 3 core categories as follows:

1. Respondents who indicated Spiritual Pain and changes to previously held views of life (and death), with comments such as "life has no meaning or value; to continue living is burdensome/ painful" etc.
2. Respondents who claimed to have lost the "joy of daily living" and "sense of fulfillment."
3. Respondents who indicated "anxiety/uncertainty."

Categories 1&2 appear related and category 2 in particular suggests an overall qualitative decline in the life of the bereaved.

Key words: Loss of spouse, Spiritual anguish, Meaning & fulfillment in life,  
Companionship, Japanese