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**THE MEANING OF SOCIAL SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONAL CARE-GIVERS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND OTHERS FOR CANCER PATIENTS.** J de Ruiter  
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As part of a larger study on Quality of Life of cancer patients, the meaning of social support given by doctors, nurses, family members and 'significant others' has been examined. The central question is: what is the nature of the contribution of several networks to experienced social support given to cancer patients? Kessler *et al* (1985) has found in other research among cancer patients, some evidence that those patients with the worst prognosis are less likely to receive support than those in better physical health. In this study we have distinguished four network dimensions (based on P.C.A.) 1. Professional Network, e.g, (medical specialists, general practitioners, nurses) 2. Family Network, e.g, family members, friends, acquaintances, neighbours, 3. Other Network, e.g, fellow patients, clergymen, social workers, colleagues, strangers 4. partner. The subject-matter of this paper is limited to the first three dimensions only. Social support is the positive or negative subjective elements of interaction. Surgery patients and chemotherapy patients, both with bad prognosis have been found to get less support from the professionals than those with a good prognosis. Overall cancer patients received mainly informational support and instrumental aid from the "Professional Network". Both groups received mainly emotional support from the "Family Network". The principal form of support given by the "Other Network", was of the instrumental kind.

Kessler, R.C, Price, R.H, Wortman, C.B, (1985) Social Factors in Psychopathology: Social Support and Coping Processes, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 36, pp 531-572.