Purpose
• To develop a middle range theory (MRT) of symptom management to guide the assessment and management of patients in a nurse-led symptom management clinic in the NIH (National Institutes of Health) campus.
• Specific aims:
  1) to identify, retrieve and critique the studies that relate to the 5 cardinal symptoms of chronic conditions
  2) to organize major concepts to create a schema of the MRT
  3) To derive propositions from related concepts to guide practice.

Method
• Patients with chronic conditions experience multiple symptoms occurring in clusters.
• Approaches to symptom evaluation and management must shift to deal with this reality.

Leorey Saligan, PhD, CRNP, FAAN researches, designs, and implements clinics to treat symptom clusters, rather than disease, using biobehavioral approaches based on an in-depth understanding of the biology of the symptoms, including his own discoveries in genetics, and the human experience of symptom clusters that patients suffer.

Sr. Callista Roy, PhD, RN, FAAN is a consultant for establishing the theoretical basis for the clinic and for testing its effectiveness.

Results
• The authors developed a framework that included ten categories of major concepts. The 10 categories are: physiologic factors, environmental factors, person factors, systemic stress, symptom experience, behavioral response of coping, assessment of symptom clusters, management of symptom clusters, outcomes, adapting to chronic condition.

• The framework is being used to guide the development of propositions connecting major concepts.

Framework

Proposition
Radiation as type of treatment and presence of social support in women with symptom cluster of fatigue, pain, anxiety and depression is directly associated with greater quality of life than those having chemotherapy with no social support.

References/Support
• CINAHL 49
• Reports higher quality of life for women with cancer experiencing a cluster of symptoms based on a given treatment and a context of social support

Implications
• Recently a vision was articulated for the NINR intramural program to develop a symptom management center which increases the timeliness of this collaborative project
• The MRT will be a tool to guide nurse assessment and interventions in a nurse-led clinic that builds upon and develops further nursing knowledge
• The MRT will lead to more effective interventions to treat patients with the cardinal symptoms of pain, fatigue, sleep disturbance, psychological distress and difficulty concentrating
• The propositions can be tested in NIH clinic for dealing with symptom clusters experienced by persons and families as adaptive systems.