Relationship Between Self Esteem and Meaning of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Breast cancer is one of the most common non-communicable diseases in Indonesia. The impact that appears on breast cancer patients is a decrease in self-esteem which will influence the patient's difficulty in finding the meaning of life. **Objectives:** This study aims to determine the relationship between self-esteem and the meaning of life in breast cancer patients in hospitals in the agricultural region of Jember Regency. **Methods:** This research used quantitative research methods with a cross-sectional study approach. This research used a purposive sampling method involving 86 breast cancer patients. The research was conducted at the Baladhika Husada Level III Hospital in Jember. Data collection was carried out using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) questionnaire and the Meaning of Life Questionnaire (MLQ). **Result:** The results showed that the majority of breast cancer patients had high self-esteem (87.2%) and the majority of breast cancer patients had high meaning in life (76.7%). Data analysis using Kendall Tau-C showed (p-value = 0.004 with r value = 0,26), which means there is a relationship between self-esteem and the meaning of life for breast cancer patients. **Conclusion:** Breast cancer patients who have high self-esteem tend to be better and able to face life challenges, increase the patient's enthusiasm to achieve goals, and find meaning in their lives. This helps patients view their lives positively so that breast cancer patients are can accept and adapt to the disease and changes that occur in their lives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are part of degenerative diseases, one of which is cancer (Irwan, 2016). Breast cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in Indonesia. The Indonesian Ministry of Health explains that breast cancer occurs due to malignancy in the breast tissue originating from the duct epithelium and lobules (Hamzah et al., 2021). Breast cancer has surpassed lung cancer as the most frequently diagnosed with an estimated 2.3 million new cases (Sung et al., 2021). The Global Burden Cancer Report in 2020 reported that there were an additional 396,914 new cases of cancer with the five most common types of cancer. Breast cancer ranked first in Indonesia with an increase of 68,858 cases (16.6%), followed by cervical cancer with 36,633 cases (9.2%), lung cancer with 34,783 cases (8.8%), colorectal cancer with 34,189 cases (8.6%) and liver cancer as many as 21,392 cases (5.4%). The Indonesian Ministry of Health has made treating breast cancer a top priority because of the high rate of breast cancer in Indonesia. One of the programs to deal with breast cancer in Indonesia is to carry out the National Strategy for Controlling Breast Cancer in Indonesia which includes health promotion, early detection and case management (Ardhiansyah, 2022).

Women diagnosed with breast cancer can experience various complaints, both physical and psychological (Merlin et al., 2021). This condition is a frightening time for breast cancer patients because of the shadow that they will not live much longer, fear that their appearance will be less attractive, they will not be able to act as a wife or mother well, and so on. Breast cancer patients also experience pain and physical symptoms due to cancer growth such as hair loss, nausea, vomiting, anorexia and intestinal obstruction. The decline in body function experienced by breast cancer patients causes psychological stress such as feelings of sadness, hopelessness, shame, anxiety and depression (Sinuraya, 2017). The decline in body function in breast cancer patients has an impact on self-esteem, namely there is a feeling of not being able to fulfill the role of a normal individual as usual (Aprilianto et al., 2021). Self-esteem is the process of achieving one's ideal based on self-assessment and evaluation of the results obtained both internally and externally (Suhron, 2017). A person's self-esteem becomes positive when they feel capable, valuable and competent, while a person's self-esteem will become negative if their self-ideals and abilities do not match their desires (Patrisia et al., 2020).

Negative self-esteem creates low self-esteem which is characterized by the emergence of feelings of worthlessness, uselessness and inferiority in a person for a long and prolonged period of time (Saputra et al., 2021). According to Asmadi (2008), someone who is sick will experience a decrease in self-esteem due to an increased sense of dependence on other people. Low self-esteem that is not treated immediately can have a lasting impact and cause other health problems, especially mental health (Wuryaningsih et al., 2018).

Research by Niveau et al. (2021) explained that the physical and psychological changes experienced by breast cancer patients have an impact on how patients assess and see themselves. Sihombing and Darmo's (2022) research shows that the majority of respondents had negative self-esteem, 20 people (66.7%) and 10 people (33.3%) with positive self-esteem. In line with Sihombing and Darmo's research, research by Yulastri et al. (2016) showed that 12 people (24.5%) had positive self-esteem and the remaining 37 people (75.5%) experienced negative self-esteem. Physical conditions that change from normal to sick can reduce a person's motivation to fulfill

their life targets. Chronic diseases such as cancer can affect daily activities and it takes time to adapt to the pain experienced. At times like this, patients will find out about the meaning of their life (Candra and Pande, 2016). Frankl in Bastaman (2007) stated that the meaning of life can be found in every situation, whether in pleasant situations or when experiencing suffering, such as in conditions of illness, guilt and death. "Meaning in Suffering" (Meaning in Suffering) and "Wisdom in Disaster" (Blessing in Disguise) are expressions that show that even though conditions are full of suffering, individuals can still find meaning in their lives. In Lengkey's (2017) research, two of the three patients who were interviewed admitted that they did not want to accept the doctor's diagnosis of cancer, felt that their lives would soon be destroyed and ended, and felt worse because of the cancer in their bodies. In line with previous research, research conducted by Ausrianti and Rifka (2023) shows that 6 out of 10 breast cancer patients feel helpless and useless because they have experienced difficult trials, and have lost their life expectancy because they have cancer that is not easy to cure.

The meaning of life for cancer patients is a major concern. Neglecting the meaning in life risks the patient's psychosocial well-being. This risk can include increased feelings of anxiety, depression, risk of suicide and reducing the patient's desire to live (Hassankhani et al., 2017). Patients who fail to find and fulfill the meaning of their lives tend to feel that they are unable to solve the problems they face. Patients will also feel empty, unenthusiastic, hopeless, and no longer have a purpose in life (Julistia et al., 2022). The meaning of life can improve the patient's psychological condition. When the meaning of life has been found and fulfilled, the individual will feel that his life is happy, meaningful, valuable and protected from despair (meaningful) (Bastaman, 2007). Based on the description above, it can be concluded that changes in the physical and especially psychological conditions of breast cancer patients can affect self-esteem and the meaning of life, thereby potentially endangering the patient's mental health. Previous research conducted by I Wayan Candra and Pande Putu Ida Oktayani only looked at the description of the meaningfulness of life of cancer patients and obtained results that 60.7% of cancer patients had high meaningfulness of life, 34.6% had moderate meaningfulness of life, and 4.3% had low meaningfulness of life. The latest research carried out by researchers today is to test the correlation between two variables, namely self-esteem and the meaning of life in breast cancer patients, where this research has never been carried out before. The research location also has updates, previous research was carried out at the Wangaya Denpasar Regional Hospital and the current research location will be carried out at the Baladhika Husada Level III Hospital in Jember, which is one of the hospitals in the agricultural area of Jember Regency which handles many cases of breast cancer.

The agricultural sector is able to improve the welfare of farmers, but on the other hand it can also have a negative impact, especially on the health of farmers and people who use agricultural products due to the use of pesticides that do not meet standards. Agricultural regions have unique social, economic and environmental characteristics, which influence the health conditions of their residents. Farmers, as the main group in Jember Regency, have different lifestyle patterns, occupational risks and access to health services compared to urban residents. It is estimated that only 10 out of 1,000 Indonesian farmers implement pesticide use patterns as recommended (Murwanto and Rosita, 2022). Farmers' lack of training, awareness and knowledge of the dangers

of pesticide exposure can increase adverse health risks. The impact of exposure to pesticides that do not meet standards can cause health problems such as skin allergies, asthma, Parkinson's and even cancer (Erwin et al., 2019). The estrogen content in pesticides is thought to increase the process of cell proliferation (Muhartono, 2018). This research analysis will discuss the characteristics of breast cancer patients in agricultural areas from a demographic, socioeconomic and health perspective. The results of the preliminary study that researchers obtained in the last three months, namely from October to December 2022, there were a total of 605 visits from breast cancer patients undergoing treatment and chemotherapy at the Baladhika Husada Hospital in Jember. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research on the relationship between self-esteem and the meaning in life of breast cancer patients in the agricultural regional hospital of Jember regency.

2. METHODS
Research Design

This research used quantitative methods with correlational study type with a cross-sectional design. This study aims to determine the relationship between self-esteem and the meaning of life in breast cancer patients.

Population and Sample

Based on hospital medical record data, 605 patient visits were obtained at the Oncology Clinic in a 3 month period (Source: medical records of Baladhika Husada Level III Hospital Jember, 2023). Determining the sample uses consecutive sampling, namely sampling is carried out by selecting samples that meet the research criteria for a certain period of time so that the sample size is met (Roflin et al., 2021). The sampling period in this study was 1 month, and a sample size of 86 people was obtained. The sample in this study used respondents who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria created by the researcher. The inclusion criteria of this study were female patients diagnosed with breast cancer, breast cancer patients who have received chemotherapy treatment and are currently undergoing outpatient treatment, breast cancer patients who are willing to sign an informed consent form. The exclusion criteria were breast cancer patients who have just undergone post-op mastectomy, patients who do not complete the instruments.

Instrument

The data of respondent demographics were collected using a sociodemographic questionnaire, self esteem in breast cancer patients data were collected using Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) questionnaire and meaning in life in breast cancer patients data were collected using Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ). The sociodemographic questionnaire identified characteristics of respondents such as age, occupation, highest level of education, income, marital status, and duration of breast cancer. RSES questionnaire has 8 statement items that measure positive and negative feelings related to self-esteem which are divided into 4 favorable statements and 4 unfavorable statements. RSES questionnaire classified into 2 categories, including high if the score is ≥ 33 and low if the score is < 33. MLQ has 10 statement items consisting of subscales for the current condition of the meaning of life (Presence of

Meaning/POM) and the search for meaning in life (SFM). MLQ classified into 3 categories, including low category if the score is between 10-27, medium category if the score is between 28-35, high category if the score is between 36-40. The questionnaire has been tested for validity and reliability, RSES questionnaire validity scores were 0.494-0.897 and the cronbach alpha value was 0.861, and MLQ validity scores were 0,534-0,93 and the cronbach alpha value was 0,941.

Research Procedure

Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to patients at the oncology polyclinic who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The aims of the study were conveyed first to patients who met the inclusion criteria before giving informed consent. Patients who agree to informed consent can then complete the questionnaire. The researcher will help read and fill in the answers to the questionnaire statements according to the answers specified by the respondent if the respondent experiences difficulties during the process of filling out the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data collected through the questioners were coded and entered into SPSS version 26.0. This research employed descriptive and correlational data analyses. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize occupation, highest level of education, income, marital status, and duration of breast cancer, means and standard deviation were used to summarize respondent's age. A Kendall Tau-C was used to analyze the correlation between self esteem and meaning in life in breast cancer patient at the agricultural regional hospital of Jember regency. The data shows that there is a correlation if the p value <0.05 and the result of correlation data showed that the p value score is 0,004 so it can be concluded that there is a correlation between self-esteem and the meaning in life in breast cancer patients at the agricultural regional hospital of Jember regency.

Ethical Clearance

This study obtained ethical approval from the health researcher ethics committee Faculty of Nursing, University of Jember (No. 288/UN25.1.14/KEPK/2023). All respondents have explained the research's purposes and there was nothing that harmed breast cancer patients during data collection.

3. RESULT
Characteristics of Breast Cancer Patients at the Jember Regency Agricultural Regional Hospital

Table 1 which discusses respondents' occupations shows that 52 respondents act as housewives with the highest percentage being 60.5% and the lowest percentage of respondents' jobs being 1.2% being civil servants with 1 respondent. The distribution of respondents' latest education shows that as many as 26 respondents completed high school/equivalent education with the highest percentage being 30.2% and the lowest percentage of respondents' final education, namely 3.5%, did not attend school with a total of 3 respondents. The distribution of respondents' income shows that 61 respondents had an income of <Rp. 2,555,662 with a percentage of 70.9%

of the total respondents. The distribution of marital status shows that as many as 72 respondents are married with the highest percentage being 83.7% and the lowest percentage of respondents' marital status being 3.5% unmarried with 3 respondents. The distribution of the length of time they have had cancer shows that 57 respondents have had cancer for > 1 year with a percentage of 66.3% and 29 respondents have had cancer for ≤ 1 year with a percentage of 33.7%.

Table 1. Characteristics of Breast Cancer Patients at the Jember Regency Agricultural Regional Hospital (n = 86)

Demographic data		Mean	SD
Age		52.10	9,678
Demographic Data		**Frequencies (f)**	**Percentage (%)**
Occupation	Farmer	8	9,3
	Self employed	19	22,1
	Civil servant	1	1,2
	Housewives	52	60,5
	Etc.	6	7,0
Total		86	100
Highest Level of Education	Not attended school	3	3,5
	Elementary School	16	18,6
	Junior High School	18	20,9
	High School	26	30,2
	College	23	26,7
Total		86	100
Income (Jember Regency Minimum Wage, 2023)	< Rp. 2.555.662	61	70,9
	≥ Rp. 2.555.662	25	29,1
Total		86	100
Marital Status	Not Married	3	3,5
	Married	72	83,7
	Widow	11	12,8
Total		86	100
Duration of Breast Cancer	≤ 1 year	29	33,7
	> 1 year	57	66,3
Total		86	100

Self Esteem of Breast Cancer Patients at the Jember Regency Agricultural Regional Hospital

Table 2. Self Esteem of Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency (n = 86)

Self Esteem	Frequencies (f)	Percentage (%)
High	75	87,2
Low	11	12,8

Table 3. Self Esteem Indicator of Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency (n = 86)

Self Esteem Indicator	High		Low		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Express self-acceptance verbally	59	68,6	27	31,1	86	100
Accepting criticism and connecting with others	52	60,5	34	39,5	86	100
Tell about the successes achieved	50	58,1	36	41,9	86	100
Fulfillment of a significant role	59	68,6	27	31,4	86	100

Based on table 3, it shows that the order of self-esteem indicators from highest to lowest is the indicator of verbally expressing self-acceptance and fulfilling a significant role, namely 59 respondents (68.6%), then there are indicators of accepting criticism and relating to other people as many as 52 respondents (60.5%), and the indicators tell of the success achieved by 50 respondents (58.1%).

Meaning of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at the Jember Regency Agricultural Regional Hospital

Table 4. Meaning of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency (n = 86)

Meaning in Life	Frequencies (f)	Percentage (%)
High	66	76,7
Moderate	19	22,1
Low	1	1,2

Based on table 4, it shows that 66 respondents (76.7%) had high meaningfulness of life, then 19 respondents (22.1%) had moderate meaningfulness of life and only 1 respondent (1.2%) had low meaningfulness of life.

Table 5. Meaning of Life Indicator of Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency

Meaning in Life Indicator	High		Low		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Presence of Meaning	54	62,8	32	37,2	86	100
Search for Meaning	57	66,3	29	33,7	86	100

Based on table 5, it shows that the search for meaning life indicator is in the high category, namely 57 respondents (66.3%).

The Relationship between Self-Esteem and the Meaning of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency

Table 6. Relationship between Self-Esteem and Meaning of Life in Breast Cancer Patients at the Agricultural Regional Hospital of Jember Regency (n=86)

Self Esteem	Meaning of Life						Total	p value	r
	High		Middle		Low				
	f	%	f	%	f	%			
High	63	84,0	12	16,0	0	0,0	75	0,004	0,26
Low	3	27,3	7	63,6	1	1,2	11		

Based on table 6, it was found that the 63 respondents who had high self-esteem mostly had high meaningfulness of life (84%), a small number had moderate meaningfulness of life (16%), and none had low meaningfulness of life (0%). Of the 11 respondents who had low self-esteem, most of them had moderate meaningfulness of life (63.6%), a small number had high

meaningfulness of life (27.3%), and 1 respondent had low meaningfulness of life (1.2%). Research data shows that 3 breast cancer patients have low self-esteem and high meaningfulness of life (27.3%), on average the characteristics of the respondents are that they are married, work as housewives, and have had cancer for > 1 year.

The results of the Kendall Tau-c statistical test are p value = 0.004 which means p<0.05 with an r value of 0.26 which shows that Ha is accepted where there is a relationship with a low level of correlation between self-esteem and the meaning of life for breast cancer patients in agricultural area hospitals. Jember Regency.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that there is a relationship between self-esteem and meaning in the lives of breast cancer patients. Self-esteem is directly proportional to the meaning of life in breast cancer patients. High self-esteem in breast cancer patients will help patients build meaning in their lives, and vice versa.

Based on the research results, indicators of self-esteem that are in the high category are indicators of expressing verbal self-acceptance and fulfilling a significant role for 59 respondents (68.6%). Indicators of expressing self-acceptance verbally include several statements, namely "I accept my situation as it is, even though I was diagnosed with breast cancer; being diagnosed with breast cancer does not reduce my overall satisfaction with myself", while a significant indicator of role fulfillment is the statement "I feel that I am worthy enough, even though I was diagnosed with breast cancer". The majority of breast cancer patients chose the 'Strongly Agree' option in the indicator statement expressing verbal self-acceptance, namely: "I accept my situation as it is, even though I was diagnosed with breast cancer" as many as 71 respondents (82.6%) and the indicator statement of role fulfillment which was significant was 66 respondents (76.7%).

Women diagnosed with breast cancer need to adapt to their condition in order to face and take control of the events that have occurred (Pardede et al., 2020). Based on the theory of Tsai et al. (2021) stated that self-esteem is the main key to patient development in facing life's challenges and as a reminder that breast cancer patients also deserve happiness. Based on research results, the average age of breast cancer patients is 52 years, which is in middle adulthood. At this age, self-esteem still has the potential to increase, and will decrease in the age range of 60-100 years (Nurmayunita, 2021). Education level, occupation, marital status, and how long they have had cancer can also influence the self-esteem of breast cancer patients.

Research data shows that of the 75 respondents with high self-esteem, the majority studied up to university, namely 23 respondents (30.7%). This is according to Aprilianto et al. (2021) where education functions as a means of empowering individuals to increase knowledge in order to develop personal potential. A person's high level of education can influence their ability to absorb knowledge, thereby increasing that person's self-esteem. (Aprilianto et al., 2021). Research data shows that of the 75 respondents with high self-esteem, the majority are married, namely 63 respondents (84%) and are housewives, namely 46 respondents (61.3%). According to Sembiring et al. (2022) which states that the presence of a husband can influence the self-esteem of breast cancer patients. Breast cancer patients who are accompanied by their husbands when undergoing treatment and receive attention from their husbands when patients complain about their illness will

be able to foster feelings of affection so that breast cancer patients' self-esteem can increase. Research data shows that of the 75 respondents with high self-esteem, the majority have had cancer for > 1 year. Based on research by Sitepu and Wahyuni (2018) which states that breast cancer patients who have had cancer > 1 year are more able to develop adaptive coping, thereby minimizing the occurrence of psychosocial problems such as low self-esteem.

The mismatch between reality and expectations makes it difficult for breast cancer patients to feel valuable. However, with support from partners and family, breast cancer patients can feel appreciated, cared for, and not feel isolated and ostracized (Sembiring et al., 2022). Apart from that, self-acceptance can also help breast cancer patients to build self-esteem. Self-acceptance in breast cancer patients does not mean giving up or not trying to recover, but rather as a form of struggle against the disease (Irfan and Masykur, 2022).

Being diagnosed with cancer can change an individual's view of the meaning of their life. Breast cancer patients who find the meaning of their lives when life does not go according to what they had planned, will live life with enthusiasm, far from feeling empty every day, have a purpose in life, and get satisfaction from the activities or work they do (Nabilah et al. , 2022). Breast cancer patients who have an adaptive response to their disease will have the view that cancer is a disease that can be controlled and for some patients this is an opportunity where they can live a better life. This view helps breast cancer patients to see the meaning of life from a new perspective, appreciate life more, and motivates patients to change their lifestyle for the better, such as starting to consume healthy and nutritious food and starting to exercise (Zion et al., 2019).

Based on the research results, indicators meaning in life search for meaning (SFM) is in the high category, namely 57 breast cancer patients (66.3%). The majority of breast cancer patients chose the 'Strongly Agree' option in one of the search for meaning indicator statements, namely: "After being diagnosed with breast cancer, I always look for something that can make my life better" as many as 75 breast cancer patients (87.2%). The meaning in life that the patient successfully fulfills will make the patient's life more meaningful and valuable (Ausrianti and Rifka, 2023).

According to Frankl in Qori'ah and Yuminda (2020), the meaning in life is influenced by two factors, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors include thinking patterns, attitude patterns, self-concept, style of appreciation or belief, worship, and personality. External factors include work, experience, family relationships, culture and the social environment of society.

Research data shows that of the 66 respondents who have high meaning in life, the majority work as housewives, namely 41 respondents (62.1%). Patients admit that doing household chores can channel positive energy into the house, making them feel that their days are still productive, enjoyable and more meaningful. According to Frankl in Thill et al. (2020) which states that work is one of the sources a person can find the meaning in life. According to Jadidi and Ameri (2022), breast cancer patients who receive support from their families can find meaning in their lives. The meaning in life is realized in the form of helping each other, having a goal in life, adapting to the conditions that occur, maintaining positive feelings within oneself and keeping family relationships good.

Based on the results of interviews, it was found that patients who have had cancer for > 1 year usually exchange experiences regarding breast cancer care and treatment, share their pain and enthusiasm, and are ready to help and accompany new breast cancer patients who are undergoing

treatment. Meaningfulness in the patient's cancer experience can make the patient stronger to live each day. One of the efforts made by breast cancer patients to share their experiences is by joining breast cancer communities. Breast cancer patients who are members of the community admit that they are happy because they can take part in activities with community friends and feel that their lives are more meaningful because they can help fellow breast cancer fighters.

High self-esteem in breast cancer patients will help patients build meaning in their lives, and vice versa. This is in line with Park's (2022) research which states that positive self-esteem determines a person's perspective regarding the meaning of their life. Rusfiana and Sugiasih's (2021) research also shows that individuals with high self-esteem are better able to understand and interpret their lives. Self-esteem can be shown by an attitude of acceptance or rejection (Sudana et al., 2016). High self-esteem is shown by an attitude of acceptance so that it can increase positive attitudes in breast cancer patients. According to Niveau et al. (2021) high self-esteem encourages patients to be persistent in facing difficulties, increases the patient's enthusiasm to continue achieving goals in life, and accepts the illness they are experiencing. Accepting conditions and looking back at the situation that occurred from a positive perspective is a stage for a person to find meaning in his life (Park, 2022).

One of the stages for a person to find meaning in life is to accept conditions and look back at the situation that occurred from a positive perspective. The meaning in life is an important aspect for patients to be able to adapt to illness and changes in their lives (Escritt et al., 2022). Breast cancer patients who have meaning in life will live life with enthusiasm, far from feeling empty every day, have a purpose in life, have a goal to be more useful to other people in the rest of their life, motivating patients to change their lifestyle for the better, such as start consuming healthy food and start exercising, and get satisfaction from the activities or work they do (Zion et al., 2019).

Researchers assume that breast cancer patients' self-esteem plays a major role in the process of finding meaning in their lives. An attitude of self-respect can increase the patient's motivation to fight the disease they are facing. The existence of motivation makes patients always maintain their level of productivity so that patients are able to provide benefits to other cancer fighters and people around them, and helps maintain the patient's psychological stability.

5. CONCLUSION

The results showed that there is a relationship between self esteem and meaning in life in breast cancer patients at the agricultural regional hospital of Jember regency. Further researchers can pay more attention to using qualitative research methods, so that discussions about self-esteem and the meaning in life can be more in-depth. Future researchers can also examine the relationship between the meaning of life and influencing factors, for example work, marital status or family relationships, and experience.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors state no conflict of interest.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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