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The Psycho-Socio-Economic and Family Burden of Breast Cancer in Ghana

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More than 1.7 million people are diagnosed with breast cancer each year worldwide and it is a leading cause of death – more in low and middle income countries. Globally, breast cancer remains the most common cancer diagnosed among women and affects 22.9% of women Worldwide. Rare in males, with an estimation of 1% cases diagnosed annually. In Ghana, breast cancer is a leading cause of death caused by cancers due to late reporting to hospital. This presentation is derived from three studies that explored the experiences of women with breast cancer in Ghana and their family caregivers. The studies employed qualitative exploratory approaches that allowed in-depth understanding of the world of the women. Participants were recruited from the Accra Metropolis using a tertiary Hospital and a breast cancer support group as the recruitment outlet. Purposive sampling technique was used to recruit the women. Content analysis procedures were followed to analyze all the data generated. Themes and sub-themes generated were supported with verbatim quotes from the participants. It was revealed that women used alternative sources of treatment such as herbal preparations and prayer. Emotional reactions to diagnosis included shock and sadness. Psychological effects of breast cancer included loss of hope, emotional instability, hopelessness, guilt, worry and suicidal ideations. In addition to high cost of treatment, other financial losses related to costs associated with lost productivity, missed work and being less productive. Informal caregivers who were involved in the care of patients reported poor health, inadequate sleep. It was concluded that breast cancer has multiple devastating effects and issues of cost of treatment should be a paramount consideration during the management of breast cancer. It is necessary to institute homecare facilities to support informal family caregivers. Also, counselling services should be available for women with breast cancer and screening services and education should be enhanced to promote early detection.

Title:

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Keywords:

Ghana, breast cancer and qualitative research

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Abstract Summary:

This presentation is derived from three studies that explored the experiences of women with breast cancer in Ghana. The studies employed qualitative exploratory approaches. Participants were recruited from the Accra Metropolis using a tertiary Hospital and a breast cancer support group as the recruitment outlet.

Content Outline:

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I. Introduction

- More than 1.7 million people are diagnosed with breast cancer each year worldwide and it is a leading cause of death – more in low and middle income countries.
 - Globally, breast cancer remains the most common cancer diagnosed among women and affects 22.9% of women Worldwide
 - Rare in males, with an estimation of 1% cases diagnosed annually.
 - In Ghana, breast cancer is a leading cause of death caused by cancers due to late reporting to hospital.
1. Body
 - A. Main Point #1 Alternative sources of treatment
 - Alternative sources of treatment such as herbal preparations and prayer.
 - Initial phase of diagnosis, some of the participants went to prayer camps and herbalists for treatment in the hope of avoiding mastectomy
 2. Supporting point #2 Psychological effects of breast cancer on patient
 3. Main Point #2 Psychological problems of women diagnosed with breast cancer include;
 - Stress
 - Anxiety
 - Sadness

- depression
- Feeling of uncertainty
- 1. Main Point #3: Socio-economic effects
 - Costs associated with lost productivity, missed work and being less productive
 - Isolation and withdrawal
 - Perceived Stigma
 - Selective disclosure/Secrecy
- 1. Family Effect
 - Poor health
 - Inadequate sleep
 - Exhaustion
 - Inability to eat
- III. Conclusion
 - Breast cancer has multiple devastating effects
 - Issues of cost of treatment should be a paramount consideration.
 - Innovative treatment options are very important to cut down cost and discomfort.
 - Homecare facilities should be available to support informal family caregivers.
 - Counselling services should be available for women with breast cancer
 - Screening services and education should be enhanced to promote early detection.

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