An Inquiry into the support needs of women treated with radiotherapy for cervical cancer: Annah Mosalo: RN; RM; ONC RN; MNS PhD student(Wits)
Disclosure

• No conflict of interest to declare
• This presentation is part of an ongoing PhD project (Phase 1 results)
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Background

- According to International Agency for research on cancer, and World Health organization, cancer accounted for 8.2 million deaths worldwide, with 14.1 million newly diagnosed and a population of 32.6 million living with cancer in 2012.

- Cancer is a global health problem and has no borders.

- A cancer diagnosis can alter a person’s perception of health and destroys future plans.
Background cont …

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women and fourth most common cause of death in women worldwide

• 83% of women diagnosed with cervical cancer are from developing world

• Women in sub-Saharan lose more years to cervical cancer
Background....

• Treatment of cervical cancer entails intensive treatment consisting of surgery, radiation, chemotherapy-radiation and brachytherapy

• Treatment for stage IIB – IVA consists of external beam radiation, brachytherapy with or without chemotherapy
Problem statement

The researcher noted in practice that women with cervical cancer felt less supported.

However, a study conducted in Tshwane, South Africa (Maree; Mosalo & Wright, 2013) found that women hospitalised for treatment of cervical cancer at an academic hospital, were not necessarily supported by their life partners. Some were partially supported by family, whilst some were abandoned.
Problem statement cont…

Giving and receiving support was a challenge in terms of distance and costs.

It is not clear how women treated for cervical cancer at an Academic hospital in Gauteng, South Africa would like to be supported during the period they are treated for cervical cancer.
Purpose of the study

- The purpose of study was to explore how women treated for cervical cancer at an Academic hospital in Gauteng; South Africa perceive the support they receive from the health care professionals

- How do women prefer to be supported during the period they are treated at the hospital
Map of hospitals in Johannesburg, Gauteng
Objectives of the study

- Explore how women treated for cervical cancer at an Academic perceive the support they receive from the health professionals

- Determine which support needs are crucial in meeting needs highlighted by the women
Method and Design

- A qualitative explorative design was used for the study
- A template style analysis was used for participant’s demographics
Population

- Population consisted of all women treated for cervical cancer at the Academic hospital in Gauteng

- Meeting a specified criteria
Data collection and analysis

- Data was collected using semi-structured Interviews using an interview guide

- Data was analysed through open coding using Content analysis
Findings of the study

- Demographics XXX
- Twenty-two participants took part in the study including pre-tests interviews
- The ages ranged between 31- > 55 years
- Eleven Participants (n=11) between ages 41- 50yrs
- Seven participants (n=7) between ages 51 > 55 yrs.
- Four participants (N=4) between ages 31-40yrs
Demographics…

• Ten (n=10) of 22 participants had between 4> 5 children

• Followed by nine(n=9) with 2> 3 children

• Followed by three(n=3) with 0 - 1 child
Findings of the study

Four themes emerged from the study:

**Route to diagnosis during trajectory of cancer:**

Most of the participant did experience that something was wrong, as characterised by early signs of cervical cancer.

- **Symptoms experienced**
  
  “You know sister the truth is that hospital processes are slow, I started around June last year. I experienced pains and continuous bleeding. Then I decided to go to a private doctor” (participant 1).

- **Staff actions**
  
  “Actually I first went to the clinic, but they were unable to do pap smear because I was bleeding. Then doctor gave me pills to stop the bleeding “ Participant, 7).
Findings cont...

**Information received:**

Some of the participants were informed about their illness

- Information pertaining to investigations and diagnostic tests

- “I had a papsmear in October, then in November I went back for my results., they never said anything. I was only told in December” The doctor said I have cancer I must start treatment (participant, 6).
Findings cont...

• need for referral to hospital (tertiary care centre)

“The doctor examined me and felt a growth inside, he then said I will have to refer you” (participant 8).
Findings cont...

Support needs highlighted

most participants expressed need for information pertaining to illness

• information pertaining to illness

“Like when we arrive in the morning, maybe a staff member should come and explain. It’s better when we are a group. It’s a bit difficult when you are alone” (participant 11)

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Findings cont...

• tangible support and financial assistance
  “for me if they can assist with ladies stuff, I am unable to go to the shops. My husband is unable to go buy for me” so If they can supply with sanitary Pads”( Participant 8)
  “for me if they can supply us with food, because we don't eat right and money for transport
• need for counselling
  Some of the participant find it difficult to accept the diagnosis
• “counselling would be ideal! Like myself I am staying with my children and I’m attending the machine. Then where will I be after ten years” ( participant 16).
Findings cont...

Family support when learning about illness:

- for some of the participants it became a challenge to inform her family about her condition
- sharing information about the disease
  
  “Like myself when you having cancer you have this bad smell. So doctor asked me if he can inform my family, I said yes because, my mom drinks. She will not support me with anything” (participant, 6)

- encourage to pursue treatment
Recommendations

• There is still evidence that health care professionals do not pay much attention when women present with early signs of cervical cancer

• Counselling should be given throughout disease trajectory from diagnosis throughout the treatment process

• An education support program is recommended to help women adapt to the disease and the treatment
Thank you