

SOCIAL SUPPORT AS A STRESS BUFFER TO THE WELLBEING OF CANCER PATIENTS: A CASE STUDY OF OCEANROAD CANCER INSTITUTE - DAR ES SALAAM- TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in both developed and developing countries, few low-income countries reported having pathology services generally available in the public sector. Also, the majority of high-income countries reported treatment services are available compared to low-income countries. Therefore, the need of social support is important in addressing challenges experienced by cancer patients towards contributing to their wellbeing and eventually reduces mortality among cancer patients. The objectives of this study were to examine three questions in what are the types of social support needed by cancer patients and responsible person. To what extent cancer patients access social support? Lastly, what are the contributions of social support to the wellbeing of cancer patients? The study findings show that the type of social support needed by cancer patients includes instrumental support, emotional support and informational support. The social supports mentioned by respondents are health service providers, family members, relatives, neighbors, local and international NGOs and religious institutions. The study found social support needed by cancer patients were accessible, except entertainment support, which was not accessed at all. However, the study findings show that the level of access of these supports differ from one cancer patient to another due to differences in economic, social, and environment setting among cancer patients. It was also revealed that social support contributes to the wellbeing of cancer patients in different ways, such as prevention of the spread of the disease and increased immunity, improvement of health conditions, meeting basic needs, and treatment.