

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN PALLIATIVE CARE A CASE OF OCEAN ROAD CANCER INSTITUTE, DAR ES SALAAM

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ABSTRACT

The social support offered during palliative care by health care providers and caregivers in supporting patients with chronic illnesses like cancer is well recognized. However, there is little data available about social support particularly emotional and informational provided to Cancer patients in the country. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the social support received by cancer patients on palliative care from health care providers and their caregivers through different services at Ocean Road Cancer Institute in Dar es Salaam Region, Tanzania. This study was guided by the general objective of assessing the social support services for cancer patients on palliative care with specific objectives of assessing the informational support provided by health care providers and caregivers to cancer patients on palliative care, assessing the emotional support provided by health care providers and caregivers to cancer patients on palliative care and identifying the type of emotional support provided by caregivers to cancer patients on palliative care. A cross-sectional study was conducted at Ocean Road Cancer Institute in Dar es Salaam region among admitted Cancer patients between July and November 2015. Data on emotional and informational support was collected through medical records review and administration of the structured questionnaire to all 125 cancer patients. Analysis of data was done using SPSS Software. More than half (61.6%) of study participants were females. More than two third (71.2%) aged 46 years and above and few (7.2%) had higher education. Informational support received from health care providers were information about the disease (30%), information of what to do when treatment is over (20%) whereas diet education (59%) and coping with side effects (40%) were from caregivers. Emotional support showed to cancer patients from healthcare providers were receiving information about their disease (30%), talking with other patients (18%), being listened and cared (15%) while from caregivers included encouraging treatment

compliance.(53%) and educational support (45%). This study identified both informational and emotional support provided to cancer patients on palliative care, but it is not effective as it should be, due the fact that Ocean Road Cancer Institute being the only hospital in the Country treating cancer which become overloaded and thus create a lot of inconveniences to patients and health workers. With these findings, the researcher think that there is a need for the government to increase and improve the cancer treatment facilities at Ocean Road Cancer Institute, develop cancer policy for easy coordination of cancer treatment and its concerns, establish other cancer treatment centres in different areas to overcome an increasing number of cancer patients in Tanzania, health care workers need to change their attitudes on service provision since some of them are blamed to cause psychological and emotional torture to patients and their relatives.