



Applicant Information

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Abstract Details

Title:

Lived Experiences and Coping Strategies among Cancer Patients in the Volta Region of Ghana: A Health Facility-Based Qualitative Study

Category:

Non-communicable diseases including mental health

Authors:

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Objectives:

Explored the lived experiences of cancer patients, their coping strategies, and the availability of mental services for cancer patients.

Method:

This was a qualitative exploratory study which recruited 11 cancer patients and two health professionals from the Ho Teaching Hospital using in-depth interview guides. Data collected were analyzed thematically using Atlas Ti 7.5.7.

Results:

Regarding the lived experiences of cancer patients, the study unveiled profound emotional impact of receiving a cancer diagnosis, leading to a sense of devastation, fear, and even suicidal ideation among patients. Ongoing emotional challenges, including persistent depression, treatment-induced stress, and constant anxiety were prevalent throughout the cancer journey. Coping strategies adopted by patients included seeking support from loved ones, immersing themselves in work and avoidance-focused coping mechanisms, such as isolation and denial. We found that while specialized mental health support was mainly lacking for many cancer patients, the role of nurses in providing emotional support was crucial.

Conclusion:

Living with cancer presents profound emotional challenges. Our study underscores the need for comprehensive mental health support services tailored to the unique needs of cancer patients. By addressing barriers which include stigma, limited availability of services, and a shortage of mental health professionals, the country would be making enormous progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 and 10 for “Good Health and Well-being” and “Reduced Inequalities.” Keywords: cancer; emotional challenges; coping strategies; mental health support; Ghana.

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