

Title: The Importance of Patient Support Beyond Cancer Treatment

Ms. Teng Ting Ti

Abstract

Background:

Cancer is a devastating disease. The diagnosis of cancer has been proven to be one of the most frightening and stressful events for both patients and caregivers. Even when patients have chosen to go on treatment, the journey to recovery needs a lot of emotional support and encouragement, which may be beyond treatments received in the hospitals. In order to better understand the challenges faced by cancer patients and caregivers in their journey of treatment and recovering, we have conducted a comprehensive survey that focuses in patient support beyond cancer treatment by understanding patients', caregivers and healthcare professional's needs and demand beyond cancer treatment, and identifying the biggest challenge that patients and caregivers face during and after receiving cancer treatment. Therefore, to help patients and caregivers optimize their journey to recovery, a comprehensive support beyond cancer treatment which covers emotional support and proper professional advice is crucial.

Methods:

A survey questionnaire was drafted and reviewed by three stakeholders, i.e. 1 breast surgeon, 1 oncology nurse and 1 patient support group representative. It focused on the questions of (1) Do you think post-care support after treatment is important for a cancer patient? (2) Do you think what are the post-care support after treatment is important for a cancer patient? (3) What do you think is the biggest challenge that the patients face while and after receiving cancer therapy and how do you think we can help? The survey was conducted in multi health care centres and a total of 250 participants completed the questionnaire.

apbcs.org

Results:

Majority of the participants were patients and caregivers (52.6%) and the rest of them were healthcare professionals (47.4%). Most of the participants (65%) think that specific cancer advice or counselling is an important aspect of support which cancer patients require, followed by belonging to a cancer support community (53%). The questionnaire also incorporated the biggest challenge that patients face during and after receiving cancer treatment. The results revealed that the top challenges faced by cancer patients are the lack of emotional support and proper professional advice to manage their disease.

Conclusion:

The findings of this survey show that it is important to have a structured, and comprehensive support beyond cancer treatment which is currently lacking in the local healthcare systems in Malaysia.