

Perceived impact of cancer and treatment modalities on sexuality and sexual lives of cancer patients in UNTH Ituku-Ozalla Enugu state, Nigeria

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A diagnosis of cancer often imposes crises on the person having to confront the illness, with lots of challenges and difficulties, pains and suffering. Issues surrounding sexuality are an important factor in quality of life. Being sexual helps people feel normal, capable, healthy and alive. It provides pleasure when many pleasures may be lacking. However, profound sexual dysfunction has been shown to have a significant negative effect on quality of patients following cancer treatment. Given the sexual and sexuality challenges that cancer patients face throughout their cancer journey, many could suffer silently from sexual dysfunction because they are not aware or informed especially in a culture where sexual issues are shrouded in secrecy.

The aim of this study was to assess the perceived impact of cancer and treatment modalities on sexuality and sexual lives of cancer patients in UNTH Enugu.

The objectives were to assess:

- Cancer patients need for information and education on sexuality and cancer
- Impact of illness and treatment on sexuality and sexual life of cancer patients prior and following treatment
- Perceived limitations of cancer therapy on reproduction
- Sexual relationship challenges experienced by cancer patients resulting from cancer therapy

The study adopted the society design, sample size of 298 cancer patients were drawn from a population of 2,980. The mean age was 50.45±10.16 years.

Findings M showed that most of the respondents desired discussion on sexuality and cancer. Discussions on the impact of cancer and treatment were considered very important. The respondents wished to have some information and materials on sexuality majority (67.1%) of the respondents preferred nurses to doctors in discussing the effects of cancer and it's treatment on sexuality and life. While 82.2% were caregivers. Most of the respondents felt adequate as a man/woman prior to sickness, but many did not feel as good following sickness. Concerning perceived limitations of cancer therapy on reproduction showed that majority of the respondents felt weak to engage in sexual activities and only very few had desire for sexual activity while on treatment majority of the women (68.6%) experienced treatment induced menopause and also experienced less lubrication during sexual activity. The sexual gender role as mother/wife, as father/husband. Majority of the respondents were anxious about the sickness. Impacts of cancer and cancer treatments on sexuality and sexual life were more on patients with triple treatment modalities and greatest on patients with stage 4 and those with co-morbidities.

Speaker Biography

Philomena Ebere Ohazuruike is currently pursuing her post graduate program and also completed her under graduate from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Nigeria. She did her School of Nursing from Mater Misericordiae Hospital Afikpo and her Diploma in Nursing from Ufuma Community Secondary School. She is now working in University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital at Ituku Ozalla Oncology Ward.

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