

## Expectations Of Patients Who Underwent Chemotherapy For Breast Cancers In Apeksha Hospital Maharagama

AAA Dushmanthi#, WASM Wijesooriya, JPTSW Jayalath, HPMD Thilakarathna, MGR Malkanthi, DMND Senevirathna and AN Senanayaka

*Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka*

*Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka*

#ayeshadushmanthia@gmail.com

**Abstract:**-Breast cancer is the most common cancer among females all around the world and in Sri Lanka. Patients receiving chemotherapy have reported several side effects and can affect for health status of patients leading many issues. Therefore, the aim of the study was to assess the patient's expectations while having chemotherapy for breast cancers in Apeksha Hospital Maharagama which can be an aid in addressing the above issues as health care workers. It is the fifth leading cause of deaths (627 000,(6.6%) among all cancers. One of the main treatment options is chemotherapy. Total of 207 were selected by simple random sampling. Data were collected through interviewer administered questionnaire and analyzed via SPSS. Mean age was 54, and 91.3% were married. Participants expected further knowledge and support of the health staff during treatments. Television and newspapers were the most important sources of information. 96.1% of participants were expecting to share all the information about their treatment with the family members or care givers. 12.6% of the participants were expected privacy to discuss their health problems. Majority, of 90.8%, were expecting a contact number to get information in an emergency or to solve their problems. Most of the respondents (80.7%) prefer to have further explanations on drugs that they received to take home for the management of side effects of chemotherapy. Out of the total sample ,96.6% of the patients reported that

they were expecting to get more explanations regarding side effect management from nursing officers.

**Keywords:** Expectations, Chemotherapy, Breast cancers

### Introduction

Breast cancer is the fifth leading cause of deaths (627000,6.6%) among all cancer types. According to the Global cancer observatory in 2019, the reported number of new cases in 2018 are 24% of all the female cancer types in Sri Lanka. One of the main treatment options for cancer is chemotherapy. It causes number of side effects and regressions for patients. Considering their expectations on chemotherapy treatment we can help to release their regressions and improve effectiveness of chemotherapy. Also, evidence-based practice is more effective than normal health care practice. Expectations are identified by using researches and findings and it is more useful for the betterment of the patient's health and enhancement of palliative care.

### Methodology

This study was conducted at Apeksha Hospital Maharagama Sri Lanka. It was a descriptive cross-sectional study. Sample size was 207. They were selected by simple random sampling method. The data were collected using pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A assessed socio

demographic variables. Section B consists of three parts. It included,

- 1) Part I - Questions to assess the knowledge on chemotherapy for breast cancer.
- 2) Part II - Questions to assess the expectation of chemotherapy.
- 3) Part III - Questions to assess the experiences of chemotherapy treatment.

Data analysis was done using the computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. Chi-square was applied to test the differences between selected variables.

## Results

Socio-demographic characteristics. The study sample consisted of 207 participants. Age categories were divided as below. 9 (20-30) 4.35%, 18(31-40) 8.69%, 48(41-50) 23.19%, 57(51-60) 27.54%, 61(61-70) 29.47% and 14(71-80) 6.76% mean age was 54.74. Also, out of the study sample, highest number of study participants were belonged to Sinhala ethnic group 186 (89.9%), and 9 (4.3%) were belong to Tamils, and 8 (3.9%) were belong to Muslims and remaining 4 (1.9%) were the others. Considering religious groups, majority of the participants were Buddhist 159 (76.8%), and others 34 (16.4%) were Catholic, Islamic 9 (4.3%) and Hindus were 5 (2.4%) respectively. When we consider the marital status, out of the study participants 189(91.3%) were married females, 13 (6.3%) were single, 4 (1.9%) were widowed and one participant (0.5%) was divorced and regarding the level of education, highest number of study participants have been educated up to O/L and A/L 151 (72.9%), nearly 20% of participants were educated below grade 8, And 16 (7.7%) were graduates. Knowledge on chemotherapy for breast cancer. Most patients 164 (79.2%) knew that

chemotherapy is a type of cancer treatment that uses one or more anti-cancer drugs with the aim to prolong life or to reduce symptoms. 3 (1.4%) told that chemotherapy is exposure to the X-Rays, 8(3.9%) answered that chemotherapy is a relaxation technique, 1(0.5%) told that chemotherapy is a surgical treatment. Also, out of all respondents few 15 (7.2%) knew the names of the drugs given. Most of the patients 192 (92.8%) did not know the names of chemotherapy medications. Regarding knowledge on pre medications, majority (79.2%) knew that pre medications prevent side effects of chemotherapy during their treatment period. According to the study results, 142(68.6%) participants tend to get medical advices immediately when they get high fever. It shows that the others should be advised on the importance of taking medical advice immediately. In conclusion, 122 (58.9%) had a good knowledge on chemotherapy, 66 (31.9%) had average knowledge on chemotherapy and 19 (9.2%) had poor knowledge on chemotherapy.

Experience on chemotherapy. According to final study results, majority of the participants 126 (60.9%) had plenty of time to give their consent before chemotherapy. 17 (8.2%) participants were expected more time to give their consent. 25 (12.1%) of participants had not given enough time to think of chemotherapy treatment. 39 (18.8%) of participants could not be able to memorize it. When we consider the side effects, 52.2% of participants had experienced pain while but 47.8% of participants had not. Weight loss 56% of participants said no and 43% said yes. 57% of participants said that they had experienced nausea and vomiting during treatment period. 68.1% of patients were affected by constipation. Specially 86% of patients have experienced appetite changes and 87% of participants have experienced hair loss during treatment period. And, 194(93.7%) of participants had a chance to have a discussion on their health issues with

the medical staff and only 13 (6.3%) of patients had no such chance. Considering the association of the sources of knowledge on chemotherapy, (23.18%) of patients who were educated by nurses had good knowledge and when considering overall results of knowledge (9.66%) of participants were poor. (31.4%) of participants were average. (58.93%) of participants were good.

Expectations of patients receiving chemotherapy for breast cancer. When consider the patient's expectations on having knowledge on chemotherapy, majority (58%) of them prefer to receive knowledge from consultant oncology surgeon. 26% participants prefer get knowledge from medical officers and 12% out of total prefer nursing officers to get information from and while 3% prefer information from family and friends and out of all 1% prefer to gain knowledge from pharmacist.

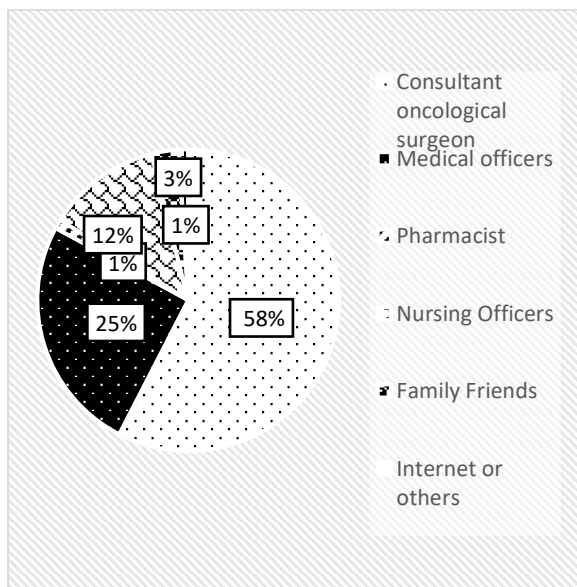


Figure 13 - The distribution of personnel that they expect to receive information about chemotherapy.

Out of study participants 188 (90.8%) were expecting a contact number of staff member to get information from when an emergency at home or to share their problems and 19 (9.2%) were not expecting a contact number. Considering receiving further information on chemotherapy, 57% of patients expect to get

information from health care personnel. 27% of participants willing to get information from Pamphlets. 10% of participant would like to refer cancer related websites. Others prefer emails and telephone calls to get information.

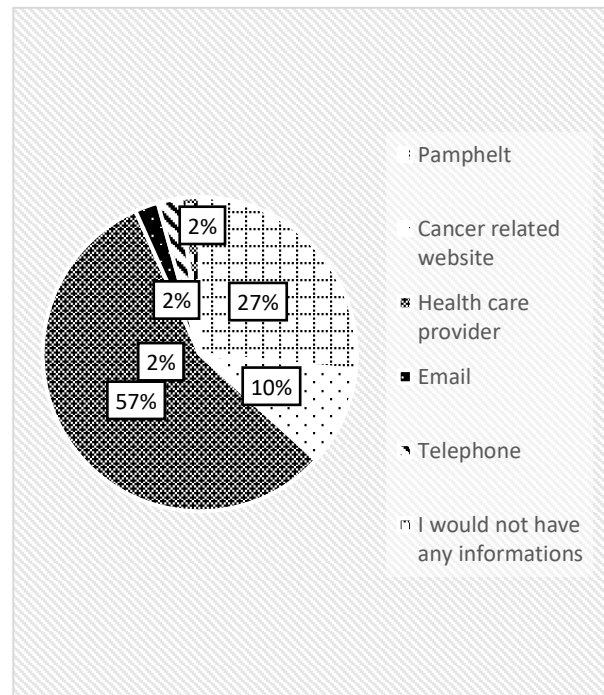


Figure 14 - The distribution of the preferences on receive further information on chemotherapy

Table 10 - Responses given by the study participants regarding the questions asked to assess the expectations of breast cancer patients.

Question asked	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Do you expect to share this information with family or care giver?	199	96.1%	8	3.9%
Do you expect further explanation on drugs that given to take home?	167	80.7%	40	19.3%
Do you think nursing officers should give advice on managing side effects?	200	96.6%	7	3.7%

The results show that they think nurses should advice on management of side effects of chemotherapy and more about their medications. They were expected to share

their knowledge with the other family members and friends.

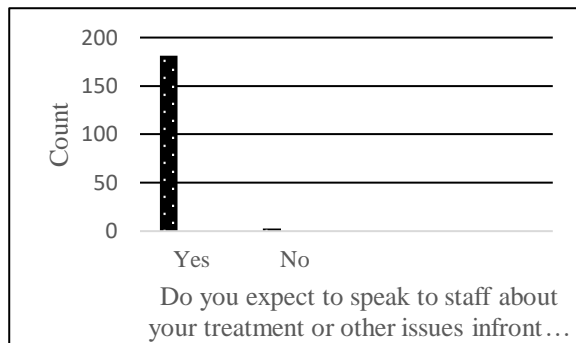


Figure 15 – The distribution of expectation to speak to staff about treatment or other issues in front of other patients.

Out of the sample 26 (12.6%) of participants need privacy to open-up their health problems. But majority 181 (87.4%) of participants did not consider about privacy staff.

As a conclusion, it is important to provide more detailed information to patients about chemotherapy, along with potential side-effects prior to its commencement, patients will be better informed, and they will understand the treatment that they are about to receive. Introducing an emergency telephone number also will helpful for the far away patients. Nurses can make use of the results of the present study in order to enhance the quality of healthcare. They should be effective in changing the patients' lives by restoring the concept of hope. Nurse would be in an ideal position to counsel patients on the administration of chemotherapy, expected side effects, and its management.

The educational booklet, brochure, and educational programs about the side effects of chemotherapy are strongly suggested. Thus, Educational programs will be an effective strategy to cope with side effects of chemotherapy and special training programs for the oncology nurses in Apeksha hospital for health education. Feedback from the patient for each visit on nursing care and relevant issues for the improvement of the care is important and to introduce an

emergency telephone number for all the cancer patients. There should be a place that provides privacy to the patients who expect privacy when they have health problems and should be addressed whether the patient expect privacy or not. Developing an oncology website on breast cancer to provide updated information is strongly suggested. Using technology for the communication, education, giving information individually will be time saving and efficient for the present and future health sector in Sri Lanka.

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