

Abstract

Background

Cancer is the leading cause of death worldwide. In Uganda, diagnosis with cancer comes with additional burden to the patients including that of the different treatment modalities. When cancer is to be treated with drugs, there needs to be a lot of input from the health workers and the patients in order for the goal of treatment to be achieved. Patients' knowledge, perception and practices tend to play a key role in the management of cancer with chemotherapy.

Objective of the study

The study sought to determine the factors affecting knowledge, perceptions and practice among patients receiving chemotherapy at Uganda Cancer Institute.

Methods

The study employed a cross sectional design in which 250 patients out-patients from Uganda Cancer Institute were interviewed using the systematic random sampling method. Data was entered into Epiinfo version 3.1 and analysed for knowledge, perception and practices. Socio demographic characteristics were cross tabulated with Knowledge, Perception and Practice to determine any associations using SPSS version 16.0

Results: 52.4% were females while 47.2% were males. 25% of the respondents were in the age range of 38-47years. 71.6% of the patients were not employed, and 54% of the patients were married, 36.8% of the respondents had attained an ordinary level of education. The knowledge about the medicines was 99.6%. 60.8% of the patients got the information from nurses, and 76.4% had heard of chemotherapy treatment from health workers. About practise, majority (88%) had never missed an appointment and 41.6% had experienced side effects of the medicines. However, side effects experienced constituted 94.8% of the disadvantages of the medicines. (96.8%) of the respondents believed that chemotherapy helps and more than half (59.6%) of the respondents believed that they were going to survive while taking chemotherapy.

Conclusion

Knowledge and perception of chemotherapy was high; however the prevalence is low for the country's population and other countries whose patients with cancer and are receiving treatment at Uganda Cancer Institute.

Recommendations

The hindrance of side effects while on chemotherapy needs to be addressed by the health workers.

Providing emotional support regularly thus encouraging patients continue with their treatment.