

Abstract

Back ground:

Breast cancer is the most common malignancy affecting women, and second cause of cancer death in the world, with more than one million cases occurring worldwide annually. The chance of a women having invasive breast cancer some time during her life is about 1 in 8 then the chance of dying from breast cancer is about 1 in 35. In Uganda, breast cancer is second most common cancer (23.4%) after cervix uteri (45.8%). The five year breast cancer survival is 39% for advanced disease and 74% for early disease. With overall survival of 56%. This poor prognosis in Uganda is most probably due to patient's seeking medical attention, and presenting at late stage IV of the cancer.

Objective: To determine factors affecting early detection of breast cancer in women over 28years who attend and had attended the oncology clinic in IHK and cancer institute at Mulago hospital.

Methodology: This was cross- sectional study, done at the two tertiary hospitals; IHK and Mulago referral hospital. A total of 142 patients who attended the clinics were included. A questionnaire was used to interview the respondents. Delay was measured in terms of the time from the diagnosis to the time of seeking treatment at the tertiary hospitals. Cross tabulations was done .Tables were used to summarize the findings.

Results:

In total, 142 study participants were included with a mean age was 53 years and 82% were married, 30 employed. About 41% of the study participants delayed for more than three months, 48% reported at the tertiary hospitals when cancer is at stage III. Main reasons for delay in seeking treatment were; cost (34%), distance to the oncology clinic, IHK/cancer institute, Mulago 15%, receiving treatment at the traditional healers (37%) and misinformation about treatment (14%). Marital status were significantly associated with delay in seeking health care (OR=0.35 and 95%CI (0.15, 081).

Conclusions:

Cost, use of traditional healers and distance to tertiary hospitals were associated with breast cancer patient delay in seeking care. This study provides very imperative information which will assist the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to design strategies that will enable breast cancer patients to present early for treatment after being diagnosed.