

Sources of support for primary home-based caregivers of patients with advanced cancers from AIC Kijabe, Kiambu County.

ABSTRACT

Introduction

Cancer is the third leading cause of mortality in Kenya. Eighty percent of cancer cases present at advanced stages, when little curative care can be done and palliative care is their best option of care. Majority of the end of life care in Kenya is done in the home setting, yet little is known about the caregiver's lived experiences and their support systems. This study sought to know the caregiver's support system so as to understand how to equip the "supporters" of the primary caregiver to optimize the care they give to the patients.

Methods

This was a qualitative phenomenological study. A purposive sampling method was used to identify and recruit twelve participants were recruited from the Kijabe Palliative clinic database. Home visits were then carried out. Data was collected in two primary ways: in-depth interviews and direct observation. A six-step thematic analytic method was used to analyze the data. Ethical clearance was obtained prior to conducting the study.

Results

Four main themes with subthemes emerged: (i) family members- financial support, relief for primary caregiver, unmet expectations from extended family members, modernization of the family structure, (ii) social and community networks, (iii) religious institutions-role of prayer, propagating hope and (iv) healthcare providers-use of phone calls, healthcare at home.

Conclusion

This study found that the main source of support for primary caregivers was family members. Social and community networks, religious institutions and healthcare workers also form part of the support system for the primary caregivers. It is recommended that family debriefing meetings should be done with the primary caregiver and other support persons. The debriefing meetings should include discussions on how the other family members can support the primary caregiver.

Keywords

Cancer caregivers, home-based, support

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