

Special issue on information need in cancer care and prevention

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Received: July 14, 2015, Accepted: July 16, 2015



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Appropriate and adequate information is crucial for patients to understand their condition and to make decisions regarding treatment options, particularly in the case of cancer patients. The literature indicates that there are unmet information

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website: www.apjon.org

DOI:
10.4103/2347-5625.163314

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Cite this article as: Choi K, So WK. Special issue on information need in cancer care and prevention. *Asia Pac J Oncol Nurs* 2015;2:127-8.

needs along the cancer care continuum, from prevention to posttreatment.^[1-3] Although information is easily accessible in the present era, understanding and meeting individual cancer patients' information needs remains a challenging task for oncology nurses, most of whom are frontline professionals responsible for education and direct caring of cancer patients. Research into the roles of these nurses in the whole span of cancer care from prevention to long-term survival will not only advance our knowledge but also provide insights into how the quality of practical nursing care may be improved. This special issue covers topics that range from oncology nurses' role in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases to their perspectives on long-term care for cancer survivors, in addition to the information needs of cancer patients and their significant others or caregivers.

The study by Johnson *et al.* explores the oncology nursing role and identifies barriers to the implementation of evidence-based strategies in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. Their results show that oncology nurses are very willing to make contributions in this area, where a heavy workload, inadequate physical environment and lack of culturally appropriate resources are the main barriers. The paper by Miura *et al.* presents an exploratory study concerning oncology nurses' perceptions of long-term cancer survivorship care. Their findings indicate that nurses may be less confident in patient education or nursing interventions in the case of long-term survival. The article by Lopez *et al.* examines the severity of treatment-related symptoms and their occurrence in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy. Their results provide insights into planning interventions or education to meet patients' individual needs in symptom management, particularly for those with symptom clustering.

Suffering from cancer can have a devastating impact not only on patients' own daily lives but also on their significant others. Research into cancer patients and their significant others has recently been gaining increased attention. The study by Yi examines the extent of unmet needs and quality of life among the family caregivers of cancer patients,

while the article by Levesque *et al.* assesses the adequacy of and satisfaction with the medical information received by prostate cancer patients as well as their partners, and identified that psychosocial issues arising from cancer need particular attention.

Most cancer incidence rates are seen to increase with age,^[4] but the literature focusing on older cancer patients is not proportionate. The study by Fitch addresses this imbalance to some extent, by considering the perspectives of older cancer patients on cancer-related information. The findings of her mixed-method study give oncology nurses useful insights into how communication with older patients may be improved.

Finally, the study by Bei *et al.* examines the prioritization of information needs in breast cancer patients, and identifies demographic and clinical characteristics associated with that prioritization. Their findings have interesting implications for tailor-made educational interventions in meeting the information needs of these patients.

Given aging populations and the ever-increasing worldwide incidence of cancer, research in oncology nursing has by any measure become a compelling field of study and is likely to grow in importance in the future. We, therefore, look forward to the publication of more and more high-quality research articles in this field.

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