Preparation and support by nurses to caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer in the northwest regions of Namibia

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Abstract:

There have been several complaints that children diagnosed with cancer in the Northwest regions are discharged from the hospital while they are still sick, and that their caregivers are not taught how to take care of these children at home and told what to expect during the disease process. This has brought about a situation where caregivers are not returning their children for follow-up as scheduled and are, in some cases, taking their children to traditional healers. The prevailing situation regarding children with cancer, coupled with the absence of studies on caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer in the Northwest regions, provide support for the study.

The study which is descriptive in nature, aimed at describing and exploring the preparation and support which nurses provide to the caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer in Northwest Regions. The study used both a quantitative as well as a qualitative approach. The quantitative approach was used to obtain the biographic data of the participants while the qualitative approach was used to explore the preparation and support that nurses provide to the caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer.

The study population consisted of caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer in the Northwest regions, the nurses in Oshakati State Hospital units where the children diagnosed with cancer are admitted, and Windhoek Central Hospital Pediatric Oncology Department. Short questionnaires were developed to obtain the biographic data of the participants prior to the interview and the focus group discussion. Guidelines for face to face interviews and focus group discussion were developed and used to help the researcher to be focus. Two focus group discussions and one interview were held with the nurses as well as thirteen face to face interviews with caregivers of the children diagnosed with cancer. The focus group discussions were held in the patients' dining room in the selected wards, as it was felt that this would create the minimum of disturbances. The interviews took place within the caregivers' homes.

The findings of the study reveal that caregivers in this study mostly live in the rural areas far from the health facilities. Even where the facilities exist they do not provide the specialised services for the children diagnosed with cancer. The findings of the study also showed that nurses undertook a number of care activities in...
relation to the care of the children diagnosed with cancer. It was also felt that nurses have insufficient levels of competence to prepare and support the caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer. They need training to enable them to prepare and effectively support caregivers of children diagnosed with cancer. The study concluded that there is a need for continuing education on cancer nursing topics so that nurses working with children diagnosed with cancer can contribute to the improvement in the quality of care delivered to these and their caregivers.

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Support for Caregivers. Survivorship. Questions to Ask About Cancer. Advances in cancer treatment mean that today 84 percent of children diagnosed with cancer are alive at least five years after diagnosis. Many ultimately will be considered cured. As a consequence, interest is growing in the long-term health of these survivors. Childhood cancer survivorship research in minority populations: A position paper from the Childhood Cancer Survivor Study (August 1, 2016, Cancer; see the journal article). Racial/ethnic differences in adverse outcomes among childhood cancer survivors: The Childhood Cancer Survivor Study (May 10, 2016, Journal of Clinical Oncology; see the journal article). In recent years, cancer represents one of the leading causes of death worldwide. It is estimated that as much as 8.2 million of deaths due to cancer occurred in the year 2012, whereas about 171,000 new cases of cancer occur every year. Moreover, it is expected that new cases of cancer will increase by 70% over the next two decades [1]. In order to support their patients, nurses will have to identify their needs using a holistic approach.