

A Study to Assess the Knowledge on Cancer among Geriatric Patients at SRM General Hospital, Kattankulathur in Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

Cancer is a dread full disease in India and all over the world. Nowadays after age of 75 many people are living longer. Therefore special attention must be taken to the treatment of older cancer patients. Hence it is necessary assess the knowledge on cancer among the geriatric patients to develop awareness on cancer.

Objectives

1. To assess the knowledge on cancer among Geriatric patients at SRM General Hospital, Kattankulathur.
2. To associate the knowledge on cancer among Geriatric patients with their demographic variables.

Methodology: Non experimental descriptive research design was adopted to assess the knowledge regarding cancer among Geriatric patients. Totally 100 samples who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected by convenient sampling technique. Self structured objective type questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge on cancer among Geriatric patients in SRM General Hospital at kattankulathur.

Major Findings: The result of the study revealed 23(23%) patients have poor level of knowledge; 70 (70%) patients have moderate level of knowledge; 7 (7%) patients have high level of knowledge regarding cancer.

Conclusion: The study conclude that there is a need for health education among Geriatric patients to understand and treat cancer earlier, hence morbidity and mortality may be prevented and their quality of life may be improved.

Key words: Knowledge, cancer, geriatric patients, Health education, Morbidity.

Introduction

Cancer is one of the non communicable disease and it ends with poor survival among all age group. Only little research data is available in radiation and chemotherapy treatment. Globally incidence of cancer and mortality is

increasing vomiting, loss of hair, oliguria, dehydration are experienced by patients after chemotherapy.

Also, very few research results are reported on cancer and risk factors of cancer and its knowledge on care. Hence, this research topic intended to assess the knowledge of geriatric people on cancer. So that health education can be planned to create awareness to seek early treatment.

According to WHO statistics worldwide 60% people die with chronic disease like cancer. WHO estimate that 8.8 million people are died in 2015 with cancer. According to one of the study done in Shandong province among elderly the prevalence of chronic disease was 81.8% and their daily health care expense

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was 28.8%.

In 2017, it is estimated that 13%, 6 cases per 100,000 per year affected by cancer, In UK 356,860 people are approximately affected. One of the states 1,688,780 new cases are diagnosed and 600,920 cases died with cancer in US. In Tamil Nadu 2 million people were affected and In Chennai 2012-2016 annual cancer predicted is 6100³. Among Chinese old people aged over 60 years are affected with all type of cancers.⁴

In china cancer is the leading cause of death. In UK cancer is the first cause of death⁵. Approaching and assessing the knowledge on cancer and doing screening is a difficult process. Early detection, treatment and improving health among elderly people is an important role of health professionals.⁶⁻⁸

Thus the study intended to assess the knowledge on cancer and identify the risk factors to prevent and treat cancer earlier.

Method

Study setting: The study was conducted among geriatric patients those who are admitted and came to medical out-patient department in SRM general hospital, Kattankulathur.

Ethical consideration:

This study was conducted after the opinion of experts in nursing, statistician and SRM Ethical Committee approval during the month of January 2019.

Sample selections:

The Patients those who are admitted and those who are came to medical op in SRM general hospital kattankulathur. The sample size consisted of 100 patients who were selected by convenient sampling technique.

Data Collection Tool

Demographic variables which includes age, gender, marital status, education, occupation, place of living, health insurance status, duration of illness, family history of chronic diseases, if yes, types of chronic illness and visual acuity.

Face to face interview questionnaire which consist of 36 items was used to assess the knowledge on cancer among geriatric patients. It has questions on domains like causes, signs and symptoms, diagnosis, diet pattern,

treatment, exercise, complications and health education Each correct answer carries score (1). Wrong answer carries score (0). Total score was 36. The Reliability of the tool was established by split half method. The coefficient correlation $r = 0.996$ which is greater than $r=0.05$ which was very high. Hence, the tool was considered reliable and feasible for proceeding with the main study.

Statistical Analysis

The data was tabulated in excel sheet and analysis was done with descriptive and inferential statistics. The significant statistical p value was < 0.05 .

Results

The demographic variables revealed among 100 participants majority of them were between 50-60 years (51%), both male and female were (50%), married were (58%), people with informal education were (64%), majority of them were unemployed (73%), urban population were (54%), majority of them had no insurance (67%), people with chronic disease were (63%), most of them with diabetes mellitus (41%), participants with myopia were (43%).

Table 1: Assessment of the level of knowledge on cancer among geriatric patients at SRM general hospital
N= 100

S. No.	Level of Knowledge on Cancer	No. of Patients	Percentage
1	Poor Level Knowledge	23	23%
2	Moderate Level Knowledge	70	70%
3	High Level Knowledge	7	7%

The above table reveals that among 100 geriatric patients, 23 (23%) have poor level knowledge on cancer; 70 (70%) have moderate level knowledge on cancer; 7 (7%) have high level knowledge on cancer.

Regarding the association between knowledge of cancer among geriatric patients and with their demographic variables "Gender" is significant with ($p < 0.05$). Other variables such as age, marital status, education, occupation, place of living, health insurance status, duration of illness, family history of chronic diseases, type of chronic disease, visual acuity are not having association with demographic variables.

Discussion

Cancer is thought to be the 2nd killing disease all over the world. Many people are not aware of the seriousness of this disease. Unfortunately many of the cancer in the affected organ are hidden for 4-5 years. In spite of all vigorous treatment people lose their loved ones after spending lot of money for various treatment modalities in the hospital. It is hereditary disease in some families. Though the cause of cancer is unknown the food habits and job status and other environment pollution like smoking, radiation are causing abnormal cell growth in any part of the body. Some type of cancer like carcinoma of bronchi can not be diagnosed unless a biopsy is done. This may lead to mortality within short time if it is not identified earlier.⁹

The warning signs of cancer must be taught to everyone to identify this disease earlier so that proper treatment can be given in the initial stage. Nowadays many new medications are found to care this disease. But if in fourth stage the treatment will not benefit. Hence it is the duty of all medical people and health care providers to support, educate and treat the people with any cancer to have quality and long life.

This result is consistent with the study done by Frida S. et al., (2012) conducted a project in rural region of Tanzania on knowledge, attitude and accessibility related to cervical cancer screening. Around 22.6% of the participants were enrolled in the study. The result revealed women's education level, knowledge on cervical cancer and prevention, husband permission for undergoing screening procedure, women's awareness on distance of cervical cancer services were associated with screening uptake and the study was found significant¹⁰.

Also the study recommended to do further research on the knowledge and practice of cancer patients. The Present study helped to teach the participants and it cleared the patients doubts.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the level of knowledge on cancer and association between knowledge on cancer among geriatric patients and with their demographic variables. The study concludes that there is a need for health education among geriatric patients to identify cancer earlier. So that death rate due to cancer can be reduced among all population.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest.

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