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INVESTIGATING THE ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF BETTER ACCESS TO RADIATION THERAPY TREATMENT TO WOMEN WITH CERVICAL CANCER IN RURAL KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Abstract:

Cancer is the disease that touches a larger proportion of the KwaZulu-Natal population most of which are from rural setting with little or no educational background. In view of that, many of the cases that present to Greys Hospital Oncology are a majority of late stage cancers. Among the various types of cancers seen, cancer of the cervix is the highest common cancer type treated at Greys Hospital Oncology Unit. The most common challenge especially from women who received radiation treatment for cervical cancer was the length of their treatment which takes up to 8 weeks. This study aimed to describe how the cervical cancer patients would benefit socio-economically should they be granted better access to Radiotherapy for their cancer treatment. To achieve this, a descriptive quantitative study was conducted among 74 cervical cancer patients who received radiation therapy at Greys Hospital Oncology unit. Results found that 43% of the participants were single, 39% married, 43% had more than three (03) children and 82% had no nanny at home to take care of the children. It was found that 22% had no education and only 8% completed matric while 58% were found to be pensioners. The study also found that of those who spend >R1000 on groceries, 42% spend >R60 on transport. Given those statistical findings, it is evident that the participants in the study were of a low socio-economic status which meant that they were likely to suffer financial toxicity as well as other social challenges in order to receive their full cause of radiation treatment for their cancer.

Keywords:

Cancer patient, treatment, cost, benefit, challenges