



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

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**An exploration of information needs among cancer patients followed up in
Outpatient Department of Clinical Oncology**

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Introduction

An enquiry hotline has been set up by the Outpatient Department of Clinical Oncology Department, Queen Elizabeth Hospital since 2004 for outpatients on active treatments, especially on chemotherapy. However, the pattern of calls and type of patient using the hotline are not categorized or analyzed. The intent of this study is to learn about cancer outpatients, the needs and problems encountered during treatment.

Objectives

1. To learn about the needs and problems of cancer outpatients during treatments
2. To find out gaps between current services and patients' needs

Methodology

A total 200 incoming enquiry calls from mid of June 2012 to mid of August 2012 were examined. Nursing staff handling calls were asked to complete the Enquiry Hotline Record for each call. The record included timing of call, demographic data of patient, enquiry content and reply/management content. Nursing staff were then asked to complete the Database Chart for each call to facilitate data analysis afterward.

Result

Female patients (71%) used the hotline more than male patients (29%). Patients with age from 41-60 (48.5%) were the main users and 61-80 age group (39%) were the second. Breast cancer patients (35%) had the highest rate in using the enquiry hotline while lung cancer patients (19%) were the second. Most of the patients were having IV chemotherapy or IV targeted therapy (49%), while post-treatment patients (21%) were the second large group. Symptom management was the main concern with a total enquiry frequency of 118 times (58.4%), while treatment information was the second concern with a frequency of 28 times (13.9%). Most calls made by breast cancer patients were related to symptom management (61.4%). Problems that encountered by breast cancer patients were mainly skin problem (dryness, rash, and

itchiness; 26%), fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$; 19%), limbs edema (13%) and pain (13%). Most calls made by lung cancer patients were related to symptom management (74.4%). The main problem encountered by lung cancer patients was pain (40%) while others (e.g. wound bleeding, palpitation, no output from pleural drainage, general weakness, etc.) had a total of 60%. Conclusion: According to the result, both breast and lung cancer patients had the same problem on symptom management. For breast cancer patients, the main symptom was skin problem and for lung cancer patients, the main symptom was pain. It is highly recommended that symptom management should be enhanced by information and education programme.