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Exploring the intention and knowledge of fertility among reproductive-age women with breast cancer in Taiwan

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The purpose of study was to describe the knowledge and intention of fertility among childbearing aged women with breast cancer. We also explored the factors associated with fertility intention. A cross-sectional research design was applied in this study. We recruited women who had breast cancer diagnosed in reproductive age (20-49 years old) and completed the cancer-related treatment at a hospital in Taipei from 2011 through 2014. Telephone interviews was completed with 178 (69.8%) of those 255 eligible, asking about socio-demographic variables and disease/treatment characteristics. Intention of fertility was evaluated by 2-item measurement of the willingness toward fertility preservation or pregnancy. Knowledge of fertility was assessed using the self-proposed questionnaire (including general and cancer/treatment specific items). More than 90% of participants thought it would take the fertility preservation before cancer treatments into account. The scale of the willingness toward fertility preservation was 21.1 (SD=31.6), while the scale of the willingness toward pregnancy was 8.6 (SD=22.3). The mean scale of the knowledge among participants was low (mean±SD=49.3±21.2), especially for the general reproductive knowledge (mean±SD=13.8±24.8). Linear regression analysis showed younger women had higher willingness toward fertility preservation or pregnancy. Our study found that some reproductive-age women with breast cancer want to protect reproductive function, especially for younger women. Underestimating the probability of infertility and overestimating the feasibility of reproductive technology might impact the choice before cancer treatment. Future educations about general infertility, infertility involved in cancer-related treatments and reproductive technology were suggested in oncologic practice before treatments.

Biography

Pei-Ju Lien is a Registered Nurse and works at the comprehensive breast health center in Taipei Veterans General Hospital in Taipei, Taiwan. Her job is to provide the education about pre-, during and post-treatment for patient with breast cancer.

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