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Unmet needs, caregiver burden and quality of life among community sample of cancer caregivers

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Statement of the Problem: Caregivers to individuals affected with cancer have so many needs, a great number of these needs have remained unmet, less have been understood about the specific nature of these needs or its association with caregiver burden, health related quality of life and cancer related distress. The aims of conducting this study were to identify the unmet needs of cancer caregivers and examine the relationships between unmet needs and caregiver burden, quality of life and distress. Various researchers have reported that individuals caring for cancer patients have so many unmet needs that have been left unattended and this reduces their productivity in caring for patients.

Method: A phenomenological study using interview method of gathering data was utilized the study. A phenomenological framework was utilized to focus on the lived experience of cancer caregiver burden and their unmet needs.

Findings: The participants in this study were oncology caregivers in active service who encountered many burdens as they cared for their patients. They encountered anxiety, depression, financial problems, fatigue, sleep disturbances and social role dysfunction. Understanding the patient's disease, self-care, quality of life and financial matters were identified as areas of elevated need for support.

Conclusion: The needs of a caregiver in cancer management are all encompassing and can positively or negatively affect their attitude to work and quality of life, therefore attention should be paid to caregivers problems, caregivers in the area of oncology should be switched to other departments once in a while and financial remunerations should also be given in such a way that is in sync with what they do. Caregivers desire support across a variety of physical, emotional and practical aspects of life, all that should be provided to them for effective continuity of care.

Biography

Faith Adoga is an Oncology and Radiotherapy Nursing Specialist.

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