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Estimating the total cost of cancer management: A descriptive prospective Cohort study among patients with cervical cancer at Ocean Road Cancer Institute, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Background: Cervical cancer is the leading cancer in developing countries including Tanzania. In Tanzania, it is estimated that about 6,241 new cases of cervical cancer develop each year. ORCI is the only specialized centre for cancer treatment in Tanzania. The economic burden is important for policy formulation especially in Tanzania where cancer treatment is free.

Aim: The objective of this study was to determine the actual cost of cancer treatment in Tanzania, with special emphasis on cervical cancer.

Methods: The study was a descriptive prospective cohort design whereby both direct cost as well as indirect cost were determined using a standardized questionnaire for each patient of all new cervical cancer patients that were recruited in October, 2013 and followed up for a period of two months.

Results: The overall cost per patient for cervical cancer ranged from USD 1, 257.24 to USD 3, 692.70 with the mean cost of USD 2, 452.45. Median direct cost was USD 2, 162.34 takes the largest share compared with the median indirect counterpart of USD 397.21. The mean direct cost for outpatients and inpatients was USD 1, 039.50 and USD 2, 301.75, respectively. The mean indirect cost for outpatients and hospitalized patients was USD 827.47 and USD 374.25, respectively.

Conclusion: As in other studies, our findings revealed that cervical cancer creates an immense financial burden on patients and health care system. Primary prevention measures, vaccination against HPV and screening, should be initiated and expanded to reduce morbidity from cervical cancer and subsequent costs in both human lives and money resources.

Biography

Harrison R. Chuwa completed his Masters in Medicine in Clinical Oncology, top of the class, from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) at a tender age of 31 years. He is currently the Clinical Services manager of the Ocean Road Cancer Institute, the only cancer centre in Tanzania and the leading cancer centre in East Africa. He has attended and presented his papers in various local and International scientific conferences and symposiums.

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