

DIFFICULTY IN CONTINUING JOB FOR BREAST CANCER PATIENTS GETTING CHEMOTHERAPY



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INTRODUCTION

- The number of People who are affected with breast cancer is increasing in Japan. The breakdown of disease rate of it went to the top in 1996, and some 38,000 new cases are diagnosed in 2003.
- A peak age of onset is about 30 to 50 -they take the central role in the social living-. The responsibility of them covers a lot involving household, child-raising and caring. In addition, The patients who have a job seems to take more effort.
- The treatment of breast cancer involves operation, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and internal use. These ways except operation are done as out-patient clinic. The average of hospital days are only 17.

INTRODUCTION

- It is not easy to cope with side effects of a chemotherapy. The side effects involve...
 - Infection coming from low number of white blood cells
 - general malaise
 - Vomiting, alteration in taste
 - angialgia
 - Things which influence women's identity involving hair loss, dye fixation and swelling.

INTRODUCTION

- The patients who continue their job come with different kind of difficulty from the difficulty that the patients who do not have their job, because not only they seem to bear a heavy burden but also have a lot of opportunities to contact with others.
- According to the research which was done by Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry in 2003, 31% out of about 2600 patients who had been working when they were informed of the cancer retired voluntarily. 4% of them are forced out of work or conversion of work-position.

OBJECTIVE

- It is seemed that the patients who deal with their job and treatment at the same time feel difficulty because the support measures are not enough.

The purpose of this study is to clarify difficulties of continuing work while getting chemotherapy for breast cancer patients, and improve their Quality Of Life.

METHODOLOGY

- Objective
 - Six breast cancer patients continue working and getting chemotherapy were selected at hub-hospital of cancer in A prefecture.
- Collecting data
 - We asked about "difficulty in continuing job" by semi-structured interview.

METHODOLOGY

Abstract of the interview

- What was terrible event during the chemotherapy at the position as (1)woman (2)wife (3)mother ?
- What was terrible event in dealing with your job and chemotherapy ?
 - Physical condition
 - Description of job, Amount of job
 - Accommodation for job, treatment and daily life
 - etc.
- What kinds of support by medical staff do you want ?

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METHODOLOGY

- Analytical method
 - The categorization was performed on the interview contents to extract words related to "Difficulty in continuing jobs".
- Ethical consideration
 - The following conditions were explained:
 - ✓ The patients can refuse or interrupt the investment and avoid sustaining disadvantages according to their will.
 - This study was approved by the ethical committee of Hiroshima International University.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- "Difficulty in continuing both chemotherapy and jobs" consisted of seven categories:
 - (1) "Physical pain associated with side effects of treatment"
 - (2) "Apologetic feeling of absence at work"
 - (3) "Save one's energy to work by the fear of recurrence"
 - (4) "Lack of care at workplace"
 - (5) "Inconvenience of hospital systems"
 - (6) "Fear of decrease in job ability from side effects of treatment"
 - (7) "Painful feeling about colleague's care after announcing disease"

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1-1

category	job category	code
1) "Physical pain associated with side effects of treatment"	"feeling tired by side effects of treatment"	"I had pain for my treatment"
	"unable to endure a weakened immune system as side effects"	"I had to stop job due to the beginning of the treatment"
2) "Apologetic feeling of absence at work"	"responsibility for their work"	"I had to stop job due to the beginning of the treatment"
	"feeling that you do not want to give their colleagues a hand"	"I wanted to continue my job because I feel anxious without involving colleagues, but I was told to stop my job because I am in danger of decreasing my immune system and I had a fever"
	"impatience that they will get their works done"	"I feel a responsibility for my job"
	"depend on her husband financially"	"I cannot stop my job because I am alone at home"
	"feeling coming from the fear of recurrence that you should not do overworking"	"I was not able to get things done because I had lots of things to do"
	"stress that they have intention of stopping their work"	"I saw that I need to do everything myself"
		"I was busy to do my classes as possible and to make handouts because I felt that my substitute got confused"
		"I felt sorry to have a period of absence, so much trouble"
		"I feel sorry to make my colleagues concern for me"
		"I would rather be part-time position because I got frequently absent from my job"
3) "Save one's energy to work by the fear of recurrence"	"feeling coming from the fear of recurrence that you should not do overworking"	"I felt sorry to burden my colleagues"
	"stress that they have intention of stopping their work"	"I felt tired"
		"I could hardly say that I was in disease, because I gave my colleagues a hand"

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1-2

category	job category	code
4) "Lack of care at workplace"	"thoughtful about the patients"	"I was told that I was fat or I was being burden in workplace"
	"lack of care at workplace"	"If people around me do not give consideration to me, I should do everything by myself"
5) "Inconvenience of hospital systems"	"too much blank between a consultation and a treatment"	"I cannot stop my job because I will put a strain on others"
		"I was treated kindly in my workplace"
6) "Fear of decrease in job ability from side effects of treatment"	"fear of decreasing their job ability caused by the disease"	"I was a little bit nervous I take time off more for the treatment"
		"I am not able to make trouble more"
7) "Painful feeling about colleague's care after announcing disease"	"unable to be given consideration by their colleagues due to notification of disease name"	"I was busy to do my classes as possible and to make handouts because I felt that my substitute got confused"
		"I felt sorry to have a period of absence, so much trouble"

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- "Physical pain associated with side effects of treatment"

The side effects appears in diverse ways because of the differences of medicine used in chemotherapy. Especially, fatigue and unpleasant feeling of vomit have an affect on not only their job but also their daily life. In addition, inhibition of sleeping may put a strain on their next day's job. Furthermore, it tends to increase their physical burden that they undergo the chemotherapy many times.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- “Apologetic feeling of absence at work”
The patients always feel a wariness for their colleagues because they have to take a leave of absence for their treatment. It seems that their feeling will change, whether they have informed their colleagues about their disease yet or not.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- “Apologetic feeling of absence at work”
“Save one's energy to work by the fear of reoccurrence”
It is clear that the patients faces dilemma –a feeling which they cannot take a full-swing in the job because of the fear of reoccurrence and which they must carry out their responsibility for their job. Therefore, it is necessary to create a system that they can take a leave absence without hesitation as a menstruation holiday.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- “Lack of care at workplace”
The environment that the patients who deal with their job and the treatments at the same time are able to obtain consent from their boss and colleagues have to be set.
- “Inconvenience of hospital systems”
The medical staff also have to give a consideration to these patients and change the environment to reduce the wait time, etc.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- “Fear of decrease in job ability from side effects of treatment”
The patients make mistakes repeatedly and amplify an anxious, fear, disappointment and guilty feeling. Therefore, the patients have to be supported not temporary but permanent.
- “Painful feeling about colleague's care after announcing disease”
People around the patient have to know that she get hurt if they show too much concern about her disease as the case may be.

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CONCLUSIONS

- These following measures are needed for the patients to deal with a job and severe treatment like a chemotherapy.
 - Supporting to adjust work environment for the patients
 - Improving the system of medical services
 - Promoting a better understanding about the side effects and the possibilities to cure
- It is necessary for a occupational health nurse working at an industrial site to support patients carefully to understand their physical pains and feelings to continue chemotherapy and work.

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