

## Importance of social support in cancer survivor

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Cancer is no doubt has been a challenge to the world population to get rid off, though the upcoming era have tried there best to eradicate it or prevent it still the efforts are at a stand. Recently by its growing norms many patients suffering with this life threatening illness, such as cancer, many patients develop stress symptoms i.e. avoidance behavior, intrusive thoughts and worry.<sup>1</sup>

Which can also be described as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-Fourth edition (DSM-IV)<sup>2</sup> as a phobic and anxious reaction in the wake of a traumatic experience. Horowitz and colleagues<sup>3</sup> define avoidance as a constrict of ideas, denial of the event (both its meaning and its consequences) and emotional numbing, while intrusion includes unbidden thoughts and images, dreams troubling ,repetitive behavior and waves of feelings. PTSD have been investigated in breast cancer patients,<sup>4,5</sup> but little has been revealed among the other cancer diagnoses.<sup>6,7</sup> A recent study of Sweden has reported that men diagnosed with prostate cancer had an increased risk of psychiatric treatment for depression, PTSD and use of anti depressants, regardless treatment strategy and risk group.<sup>8</sup>

In another study Smith and colleagues<sup>9</sup> concluded that the impact of a cancer diagnosis and treatment persists over the years for many cancer survivors. Therefore early identification of those at risk could enable treatment to minimize PTSD symptomatology. Nordin and Glimelius<sup>10</sup> reported that the early identification of those in need of psychological support at a later stage of treatment is possible through screening for clinical levels of worry or depression in combination with intrusive thoughts in individuals with cancer. Further, it

has been reported<sup>11</sup> that the effects of cancer treatment on an individuals quality of life could be predicted using measures of avoidance behavior .Impaired general health as well as deterioration of both physical and social functioning were correlated with the extensive avoidance behavior at the start of the treatment.

There are atleast two reasons that the social environment is a particularly important domain in the study of cancer. First aspect of the social environment has been from the deleterious effects of stressed life events of which cancer is one.<sup>12</sup> Both structural aspects of the social networks (eg: size) and the functional aspects of social supports (eg: emotional support) have been related to cancer morbidity and mortality.<sup>13</sup>

Secondly cancer is also give stressful resulting in issues and problem at inter personal relationships.<sup>14</sup> Because cancer is potentially fatal illness and often is character by a stigma cancer patients network members may withdraw or react inappropriately. Cancer also may affect relationships indirectly patients social activities, which will affect their access to interpersonal resources.<sup>15</sup>

The experience of cancer depends on a host of variables, including patient demographics (age, sex, socio-economic status); site of malignancy (eg: breast, pelvic), stage of disease, and type of treatment (eg:surgery, chemotherapy, radiation). Despite the diversity in the experience we believe that persons diagnosed with cancer confront a number of common psychosocial issues and as a consequence have a similar needs that can be met by people in their social environment.

Patients with cancer are forced to deal with many potential and real losses (Kissane 1994).

Clinicians when encountering with the patients with anger or disagreement may add up to them as threatening, losing hope fear, leading them to become defensive or indeed angry in response. These reactions are considered unhelpful as they are likely to result in an escalation of the patients anger (Cunningham, 2004). It would be more helpful if the any staff attending them or a physiotherapist of palliative care attending them building an healthy relationship with health workers and mutually with the patients, having a positive effect on betterment of the survivor resulting with better compliance to treatment ,having greater sense of empowerment regarding decision-making, with the help of social support there have been reports showing improved reports of pain control, psychological functioning and rates of patient recovery(Stewart 1996, Fallowfield and Jenkins 2004).

You can ask the patient to be informed, find out how to be pro-active about treatments, decision making and preventative strategies in order to gain control over condition, and the therapist should attend them with a patience and caution as talking is a sign of strength you can be aggressive towards the patient and his any kind of ignorance you must help them both emotionally as well as informative besides the family friends and support groups can offer advice and support. They should be appreciated to take time for themselves and focus on the positives rather worrying about futures.

Ofcos its a troublesome situation to the survivor but more to the family losing of beloved one, so its a urge of courtesy to act positively towards patient and attend them with accordance and love and respect for his/her betterment.

Social support is also important to the patient also after the treatment in few cases, like breast cancers.

Generally woman are concerned with there body image therefore its a important act of the palliative team to know the concern of the parent in body image before going for mastectomy. For eg. A growing body or mass of evidence suggests that changes in body image after breast cancer and its treatment may have direct effects on sexuality, sexual response, sexual roles and

relationships (Ganz et al 2002). The alterations in body image occur when there is a discrepancy between the way someone formerly perceived herself and how she now sees herself as a result of cancer and its treatment (Hopwood 1993).

1. One- third of women who had undergone prophylactic mastectomy felt less feminine and a smaller minority experienced more serious body image concerns (Hopwood et al 2000).
2. Women who underwent breast conserving surgery had a significantly more positive body image than those who had undergone mastectomy (Curan et al 1998).

There by its very evident that every human needs a sort of social support at one or the other moment in life, but its a must to those who are fighting for existence ,you can prove if your gifted with life, but if you know you have no more life to prove or you just have limited time or years in your life with no quality its tuff to overcome its an deadly feeling where no living may loss his meaning in living.

#### **Message by Author**

There is a huge difference between in “*HUMAN BEING* and *BEING HUMAN*” ofcos nothing is permanent and full fledged to be proven for life time, still the one who have read this article would realize your duty of your role satisfying the term *BEING HUMAN* in social support of the *CANCER SURVIVOR* who though knows his estimated period of life and dreaming to live without battling we shall extend our warm support trying to add quality for there life and blossom them with there strengths and help to stop worrying about the *FUTURE* as it is well-known *FUTURE IS PREDICTED FOR NO ONE,,* so qualify your *PRESENT*.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

None.

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