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Explaining the Experiences and Reasons for Non-Adherence to Treatment in Cancer Patients in a Hospital in Zahedan: A Message to Politicians

Mehdi Zanganeh Baygi[1], Atefeh Sedighnia[2*], Mostafa Peyvand[3]

[1]Health Promotion Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran
[2]Health Technology Incubator Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran
[3]Student Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

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***Corresponding Author:**
Health Technology Incubator Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

ABSTRACT

Introduction: In cancer treatment, the lengthy duration poses significant challenges, while adherence to the treatment regimen is essential for minimizing complications and reducing costs. Sistan and Baluchistan province is a deprived area with a special ethnic and cultural background in Iran. Therefore, this study aimed to explain the experiences of the reasons for not complying with treatment in Zahedan cancer patients.

Methods and Materials: This qualitative cross-sectional research was conducted using a semi-structured interview guide on 34 cancer patients who were hospitalized in all Zahedan University of Medical Sciences in 2022, and data was coded using the content analysis method.

Results: This study obtained 114 codes, five main challenges, and 10 subcategories. The primary reasons include financial difficulties, lack of access to medical services, disrupt of the healthcare and treatment system, drug interactions, and a lack of motivation to continue treatment. Other contributing factors include high treatment costs, lack of financial support, distance to healthcare facilities, limited access to medication, inadequate communication from healthcare staff, negative experiences, side effects of medications, the risk of contracting additional diseases, determinism (beliefs and convictions), and Individual factors.

Conclusion and Discussion: Adherence to treatment in cancer patients is a complex issue influenced by various factors. In Sistan and Baluchistan Province, several recommendations have emerged from this study to enhance treatment adherence. These recommendations include financial and spiritual support from the government, upgrading insurance coverage, Distribution of medicine in pharmacies, improving insurance coverage, ensuring the distribution of medications in pharmacies, enhancing transportation infrastructure to facilitate better assess for patients to medicine and medical centers, increasing health staff awareness of patient expectations and medication risks, delivering high-quality services, and promoting health literacy through training initiatives that involve trusted and influential community members.

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