

Healthcare and support needs of women with suspected breast cancer

陳品玲

Liao MN;Chen MF;Chen SC;Chen PL

Abstract

Title. Healthcare and support needs of women with suspected breast cancer

Aim. This paper is a report of a study to investigate changes in the healthcare and support needs during the diagnostic period, and factors that affect these needs in women with suspected breast cancer.

Background. Although the needs of women with breast cancer are well recognized, few studies have examined the needs of women with suspected breast cancer during the diagnostic period.

Method. This longitudinal study used an investigator-developed, self-administered questionnaire to collect data from 127 women in Taiwan on three occasions: notification of need for breast biopsy, before biopsy and after diagnosis. The data were collected from November 2004 to April 2005.

Findings. Participants had high need levels before and after diagnosis, with their top needs in the domains of healthcare services for diagnosis, follow-up and consultation, and information about the disease. They needed disease- and treatment-related information more than emotional support. Need levels were higher ($P < 0.01$) before diagnosis than after, highest before biopsy, and lowest after diagnosis. Furthermore, needs were higher ($P < 0.01$) before than after diagnosis for diagnostic services, disease information, and involvement of family and friends. Higher needs were found in married women with more education and no history of benign tumours. Need level did not differ statistically significantly by age, religious status, degree of social support, family history and breast symptoms.

Conclusion. Need levels of women with suspected breast cancer vary during the diagnostic period, are highest before breast biopsy, and related to personal characteristics and cultural context. Therefore, during this period, nursing staff should provide patients and families with culturally sensitive, individualized, supportive care.

Keywords: diagnostic period, empirical research report, nursing, psychosocial needs, questionnaires, support, suspected breast cancer