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Application Title:

Quality of life among Zambian women with advanced stage breast cancer

General Audience Summary:

Though breast cancer incidence rates among sub-Saharan African (SSA) women are among the lowest in the world, mortality rates are as high as for women in high breast cancer incidence countries. Among SSA women the breast cancer burden is heavier among younger women, with the percentages of new cases and of deaths that occur at <age 50 more than double that in the United States. Driven by the forces of population growth, changing reproductive patterns, and dietary habits, the number of new cases of breast cancer in SSA is expected to double by 2030. Between 45 to 90% of breast cancers in SSA are diagnosed at stages III/IV and SSA have a 5-year relative survival well below 50%. In Zambia, breast cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosed in adults and the vast majority of women present with advanced stage disease. The primary goal for this project is to identify key quality of life concerns among Zambian women diagnosed with stage III/IV or recurrent breast cancer. The limited literature available suggests that lack of social support, most importantly spousal support, has the greatest adverse impact on quality of life in survivorship for women in SSA with breast cancer. This project seeks to validate these findings using the FACT-G and FACT-B questionnaires and will go further to elicit unmet needs through focus groups, with the goal of designing interventions to improve quality of life. This project would significantly contribute to this scarce body of knowledge by using an internationally validated tool to assess quality of life. We will also use open-ended discussion questions in a focus group context to elucidate concerns not addressed in the questionnaires and to provide breast cancer survivors a voice for change, and an opportunity to help shape health systems and policy.

Keywords:

Voices for Change