

ABSTRACT

Total Cancer Care - A Primary Health Concern in Jamaica

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An analytical cross-sectional survey was carried out on terminally ill cancer patients. Cluster sampling was the method used to select 106 patients from which data were collected. The sampling frame used was the daily registers of four treatment centers, in the parishes of Kingston and St Andrew. Ninety four percent responded to questions on: knowledge of and attitudes towards cancer, cancer care facilities, psychosocial cancer care and questions relating to their quality of life.

This survey is the first of its kind to be documented in Jamaica. The study arose out of the author's desire to establish a link between terminally ill cancer patients' knowledge of their illness, attitude towards their illness and resultant quality of life after the diagnosis of cancer was revealed.

Although the correlation results were low, statistical significance between cancer patients' knowledge and attitude was established while

significance between patients' knowledge and quality of life or attitude and quality of life was not well established.

The greatest delimiting factors were the short time in which to complete this study and the unrepresentativeness of the study sample.

In relation to cancer care in Jamaica areas of concern were identified and strategies for improvement were recommended.