Women diagnosed with breast cancer experience of information from the internet, interpersonal interaction, and use of a digital information tool before start of Radiation Therapy – a deductive qualitative study

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Abstract (300 word limit)

Statement of the problem: Radiation therapy (RT) is one of several treatment methods offered for breast cancer. Women within this patient group express a desire for continuous information throughout the treatment. While the RT procedure itself takes only a few minutes and is painless, it requires meticulous preparation. This can engender in preconceived ideas and misconceptions about the RT process, leaving women distressed[1,2]. The rapid growth of Internet and digital technology has significantly influenced the way persons access and use health information. The health information process involves four competencies *access*, *understand*, *appraise*, and *apply*[3]. Understanding of the women's perception of the health information process is essential for healthcare professionals to meet the persons information needs. Further, it will safeguard person-centred care[4], facilitate effective health communication and active participation in shared decision-making[5]. Thus, this study aimed to explore women with breast cancer's experience of the health information process before commencing RT.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A qualitative deductive design was applied. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with women diagnosed with breast cancer to explore their perception of the health information process as well as adoption of a digital information tool, Digi-Do. The integrated model of health literacy illustrates the health information process[3] was applied.

Findings: A considerable variation in women's perception and participation of the health information process was notable. Despite access health information from healthcare practitioners was valued, majority of women additionally sought information from other sources. Information sought from the Internet was seen as easy access but at times challenging to streamline while the easy access of Digi-Do allowed instant access of reliable health information.

Conclusion and significance: The Internet and digital technology has transformed the way persons access and comprehend health information. Although trusting healthcare professionals' women are likely to want information in a timelier fashion. Digital information tools such as Digi-Do can be seen as a valuable complement to the interpersonal meeting with healthcare professionals. Future feasability studies are needed to further evaluate and test feasability of Digi-Do.

Recent Publications (minimum 5)

1. Gillan C, Abrams D, Harnett N, Wiljer D, Catton P. Fears and misperceptions of radiation therapy: sources and impact on decision-making and anxiety. *Journal of Cancer Education*. 2014;29(2):289-295.
2. Halkett GK, Kristjanson LJ, Lobb EA. 'If we get too close to your bones they'll go brittle': women's initial fears about radiotherapy for early breast cancer. *Psycho-Oncology: Journal of the Psychological, Social and Behavioral Dimensions of Cancer*. 2008;17(9):877-884.
3. Sørensen K, Van den Broucke S, Fullam J, et al. Health literacy and public health: A systematic review and integration of definitions and models. *BMC Public Health*. 2012/01/25 2012;12(1):80. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-12-80
4. Parnell TA, Stichler JF, Barton AJ, Loan LA, Boyle DK, Allen PE. A concept analysis of health literacy. Wiley Online Library; 2019:315-327.
5. Blödt S, Müller-Nordhorn J, Seifert G, Holmberg C. Trust, medical expertise and humaneness: A qualitative study on people with cancer'satisfaction with medical care. *Health Expectations*. 2021;24(2):317-326.



Biography (150 word limit)

Annika Grynne is a doctoral student in nursing at the research school Health and Welfare, Jönköping University, Sweden. She has a nursing degree and a master's degree in Advanced Nurse Practitioner from Southbank University, London, England. She has extensive experience of working as an advanced nurse practitioner in healthcare both in England and Sweden. The PhD project has a focus in health literacy, self-efficacy and distress in relation to digital technology and how a digital information tool has the potential to advance women diagnosed with breast cancer sense of being prepared before start of radiation therapy.

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Notes/Comment