

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has impacted all aspects of daily life and healthcare services, including cancer care. Delivery of cancer care during the pandemic poses great challenges, considering the competing risks of mortality related to cancer or the infection of complication related to the SARS-CoV-2 (1). Shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), limited isolation facilities, lack of reagents for microbiologic testing furthers complicates the difficulty. The primary preventive measures to reduce the progression of the disease have been self-isolation, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene. Numerous health officials and expert groups published a multitude of guides on how to care for cancer patient affected by COVID-19 including general precautionary measures to reduce virus transmission. Consequently, our institution implemented several changes in accordance to the guidelines to reduce COVID-19 transmission and better allocate the limited medical resources. However, the patients' perception on such changes is unknown. The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the global mental health creating anxiety, depression, insomnia, denial, anger and fear (2). Cancer patients in particular may experience greater psychological stress because of postponed treatment and isolation, on top of their inherent disease.

1.2 Identification of Problems

Considering the novelty of this disease, there is a paucity of information and experience of cancer management during the pandemic. Delivery of efficient consultations, chemotherapy, distribution of PPE, and choosing the ideal information media is yet to be determined.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

The objective of this study is to explore cancer patients' perception of oncology service amid the pandemic and to identify key elements that contribute to their level of anxiety or comfort.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- Identify cancer patients' general knowledge and awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Identify evaluate cancer patients' satisfaction and perception of chemotherapy service during COVID-19 pandemic

1.4 Research Benefits

The results of this study may aid policy makers in decision-making to create strategies for ensuring better cancer care during the COVID-19 outbreak.