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Evaluation of the status of psychosocial service integration and implementation for people with cancer in Ethiopia

Evidence showed that psychological problem is a frequent but underrecognized and undertreated condition among cancer patients, which causes amplification of physical symptoms, increased functional impairment, and poor treatment adherence, whereas psychological interventions have been shown to increase adherence to treatment and quality of life by decreasing psychological symptoms like anxiety and depression. Despite, the importance of psychosocial support, studies are lacking in supporting these reports in Ethiopia. Hence, the main aim of this study is to explore challenges and opportunities in the implementation of psychosocial services in 12 hospitals in Ethiopia, to analyze the two-year survival of patients with cancer, and to estimate the cost and design integration guidelines for psychosocial services in routine cancer care setting in Ethiopia.

To evaluate the implementation of psychosocial service provision in routine cancer care settings in Ethiopia. A mixed-method study approach will be used in this study. A qualitative study will be conducted to assess the facilitators and barriers of the formerly designed and integrated psychosocial support. Focus group discussions (FGDs), In-depth interviews (IDIs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) will be conducted with community representatives, health professionals, and patients, to assess the facilitators and barriers of the integrated psychosocial service. Based on the result of the qualitative study, the lacking component of psychosocial support will be added and integration guidelines will be designed. A two-year survival of patients with cancer will be analyzed, further, the cost of the integrated psychosocial service will be estimated. The qualitative data will be analyzed using content analysis, while survival will be analyzed by calculating overall survival rates and disease-specific survival rates using the Kaplan-Meier method. The survival curves will be compared using the log-rank test, and p values will be calculated accordingly, whereas, cost estimation will be done by considering costs for each component such as one-time costs (infrastructure setup) and ongoing costs (personnel salaries or training).

The assessment of the current status of psychosocial service integration and implementation for people with cancer will enable healthcare providers to ensure that these services are meeting the needs of their patients and are making a positive impact on patient outcomes.

Research Task 2

Supervisors: Prof. Eva J Kantelhardt and Abigiya Wondemagegnehu