

Cancer and Emotion; The Scope of Psycho-Socio-Oncology: At the Time of Diagnosis

The psychosocial determinants are important factors affect the quality and quantity of life of cancer patients; it will affect whole time of life but more effective in some critical points of disease period such as; at the time of diagnosis as a problematic case or incidental diagnosis during screening program, at the time of treatment, at the follow up period, time of recurrence and last days of life. Psycho social respond related on different factors including:

- Experience of the patients and his/her family about the disease among relatives and friends, it will be different for a case of breast cancer who has experience of her mother or sister involvement with good or poor outcome of disease.
- Belief, religion, spirituality is another element which will affect the psychosocial response of the patient to the time of diagnosis of cancer; it will be different for those who believe the unseen world and undying power (ALLAH) and who don't.
- Knowledge and level of understanding of disease will affect the psychosocial response of patient during diagnosis time.
- Relative and care givers understanding and reactions as well as society acceptance and stigma are effective in psychosocial response.
- Individual criteria such as; Age, Sex, Site of cancer...also will affect psychosocial response to diagnosis of cancer.

With this background the receiving diagnosis of cancer may evoke many possible psychosocial reactions such as:

- Shock
- Honey Moon and Deny
- Anxiety
- Anger and Blame
- Despair
- Guilt or Shame
- Relief
- Challenge
- Acceptance

Shock and deny which will last not more than a few days, will take in the patient in honey moon period to forget everything.

Anxiety and anger may last several weeks. Despair will guide the patient to shame or feel guilty and blame for him/her self or others. Then the patient will become sad and will challenge with this diagnosis some times more than several weeks.

Acceptance the diagnosis of cancer is the last phase of psychosocial reaction that never should be ignored by medical staff during diagnosis period.

Comprehensive care of cancer evoke the medical team to be well aware about psychosocial aspect of health of cancer patients as well as biological and spiritual aspect.

Mohammad E. Akbari
Professor of Surgical Oncology
Chairman & Editor in Chief