Women with breast cancer stories about divergent approaches of obtaining information of health, diagnosis, and treatment. A deductive approach based on dimension of health literacy

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Introduction

The aim of health information is to facilitate active participation, encourage self-efficacy and reduce distress. Health information makes out an imperative element in the preparation for radiation therapy. While the procedure itself takes only a few minutes and is painless, it requires meticulous preparation. This can engender in preconceived misconceptions, leaving women distressed. Difficulties in relation to the health information process may relate to the woman's level of health literacy and may affect self-efficacy and distress.

Method

A qualitative design was employed where semi-structured individual interviews with 15 women were undertaken. A deductive approach was used taking a stance in four types of competencies; Access, Understand, Appraise and Apply representing crucial dimension of health literacy.

The digital information tool

The tool consists of two separate but coherent applications:
1) virtual reality which offers a simulated visit to the high-tech environment at the radiation therapy department,
2) information application with a focus on cancer and radiation therapy.

Results

During the trajectory of illness and treatment, the women are constantly adapting to new roles and situations, in which the approach to see the whole women as a person who is resourceful and capable is imperative. Women's comprehension of the health information process alters and is individual. The four competencies Access, understand, appraise, and apply require specific cognitive qualities and relies on the quality of the provided health information. All four competencies incorporate the qualities of functional, interactive, and critical health literacy.

Conclusion

Increased knowledge of women’s preferences to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information will facilitate improved innovations of health information resources to meet the specific needs of the individual woman. This implies that employing a person-centred approach posing health information related to the woman's experience and cognitive abilities may enhance the persons active participation in maintain and promote health.

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