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Demand for Dance Based Exercise Program: Lessons From a Cancer Charity

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The incidence of cancer in Kenya has risen significantly in the recent years to more than 44000 new cancer cases annually. [Globocan 2022]. However, there has been no corresponding improvement in infrastructure, human resources, diagnostics and treatments. The focus of current investments is on enabling access to surgery, chemo and radiotherapy with little attention to other interventions like exercise and complementary therapies that have been shown to improve quality of life, mitigate anxiety, fatigue and related distress associated with a cancer diagnosis.

Objective: Evaluate the demand for complementary therapies including counselling and exercise.

Materials & Methods: A retrospective desk review was carried out with analysis of attendance records, patients and instructor logs as well as program reports of cancer patients accessing complementary therapies from a cancer charity from May 2024 to April 2025.

Findings: During this review period, 1628 patients and caregivers accessed different complementary therapies from a cancer charity. This was a 70% increase on the 1144 patients who sought similar services in the previous year. This translates to an average of 136 attendees for complementary therapies monthly. Psychological Counselling had the highest attendance at 19%, followed closely by Zumba at 16.5%. Half the patients utilizing Zumba were more likely to have completed treatment. None of the public cancer centres in the country offers a structured exercise program for cancer patients.

Conclusion: The growth in demand for psychological counselling to address mental health and Zumba to address the physical wellbeing cardiorespiratory and muscle strengthening present an opportunity to address gaps in patient care that are often overlooked in conventional oncology. Exercise programs combined with other psychosocial interventions are feasible safe and culturally acceptable interventions that can be delivered in settings outside of formal clinical environment to complete the care continuum as demonstrated by Faraja cancer support trust

Keywords

ZUMBA COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY CANCER

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yes

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yes

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