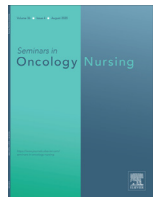




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Seminars in Oncology Nursing

journal homepage: <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/seminars-in-oncology-nursing>

Current and Emergent Trends in Advanced Breast Cancer Care

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Available online xxx

We are in a world of constant change, where people with cancer are living longer thanks to major advances in treatments and science. These treatment developments are helping people to live longer, but equally important advances in supportive care enable people to live well. The diagnosis of breast cancer alone does not determine treatment recommendations. Advances in the understanding of histologic subtypes and cancer genomics means that biological factors like HER2 or hormonal status guide a personalized medicine approach to treatment planning with the aims to extend life and to maintain and improve quality of life.

The pace of new treatment developments means it is vital that patients have access to health care professionals with specialist knowledge and be guided in shared decision-making. Indeed, to improve access to treatment for advanced breast cancer (ABC), ABC 5 guidelines¹ urge countries to develop specialist breast cancer centers. In 2020, a group of specialists published a position paper on the requirements for a specialist breast center²; the need for multidisciplinary care was one of the most important recommendations, as well as to include nurses with specialist knowledge in breast cancer.

Despite improving outcomes, a diagnosis of ABC is no less frightening for people and their families. As health care professionals, we need to be able to care for the bodies and the souls of our patients. For people with ABC, living with the disease means a combination of challenges, treatments, and unmet needs that health care professionals need to be able to recognize, help, and support.³

Nurses have a very important role—guiding patients through their care. Nurses have always been seen as best placed to provide ongoing psychosocial support and care, those who help the patients feel better during their treatments and answer their questions and fears. However, there are very few countries where nurses with specialized knowledge in breast cancer are available and very little accessible

education for nurses to improve this situation.⁴ Therefore, there is a pressing need to improve access to training for nurses to enhance their knowledge and interest in ABC care.

This special issue has a focus on ABC treatment and care, not only to make information accessible to everyone but also to heighten interest and increase knowledge on this topic. To start, Ghose et al give an overview of the landscape of ABC. Gilchrist, Patel et al, and Sanchez-Lorenzo et al follow to discuss the latest developments in subtypes of breast cancer, explaining the differences in treatment and management and what it means for the people receiving these systemic treatments.

All systemic treatments have a risk of side effects; Diez de los Rios de la Serna et al review the common side effects of these systemic therapies and how to treat them. Radiotherapy also has a role in the treatment of ABC; Zamba et al look at its use and possible side effects. Patients with ABC experience symptoms related to their disease and its treatment; Shewbridge et al explore the different problems people with ABC face, such as clinical manifestations derived of metastases.

It is very important to capture the patient experience and how people live with ABC. Patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) are tools designed for this. Warren gives an overview of the different tools available for people with ABC.

We mentioned that nurses have a very important role in guiding patients; Oakley and Ream explore the nurse's role in patient education in the ABC context. Finally, Travado and Bastos describe interventions that nurses can implement to support people with ABC psychosocially; this is one of the greatest reported unmet needs in this patient population.

We do hope you will find the articles in this special issue widely useful to your clinical practice and thought-provoking.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported here.

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