IMPROVING TREATMENT OUTCOME FOR BREAST CANCER PATIENTS IN A LOW AND MEDIUM INCOME SETTING (LMIC).

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INTRODUCTION

- UNTH BCSG is an advocate of early breast cancer detection, maintenance of improved quality of life for metastatic breast cancer patients, encouragement of the need for regular follow up.
- The group is made of members from radiation oncology, surgical oncology, nurses, palliative care team, medical physicists, radiographers, social workers and some of the unit administrative staff.
- Currently in partnership with the Breast Without Spot (BWS) Enugu, the Lakeshore Cancer Center (LCC), Lagos and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) in Buffalo, NY, USA.
- The was expansion of the programs and advocacy activities to much needed communities as well as training of community health workers following the receipt of UICC SPARC grant.
- The goals are being achieved through:
  - The establishment of UNTH Breast Cancer Survivors group,
  - Navigation system for breast cancer and helping patients make informed decisions,
  - Fast-tracking the referral processes and home care palliative services.
  - Advocacy and Training of community health workers.
  - Encouragement of multidisciplinary meetings.
FINDINGS

- A total of 240 community health worker drawn from 57 primary health centres were trained. Only 96 of them (40%) had good knowledge breast cancer, 46 (20%) practice of breast self examination, 21 (9%) practice clinical breast examination and 5 (2%) had mammography.

- 210 MBC were reached with 84 (40%) benefitting from quality of life care

- 22 breast cancer survivors are regular in attendance of survivors meeting.

- 15 breast cancer patients benfitted from Navigation Programme.

- 515 breast cancer patients have received treatment in the last 3 years with more than 45% lost to follow up either due to death or referral to other centres.
CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATION AND WAY FORWARD

- There is the need for continued advocacy to dispel misconceptions and superstitious beliefs that cancer is a death sentence.
- There are needs to have more screening centers at accessible points for early detection.
- Focus on establishing more radiotherapy centers as more than 50% of the breast patients need it to reduce locoregional recurrence and progression to metastatic stage.
- Establishing breast cancer survivors and empowering them will serve as strong tool for cancer advocacy.
- Patient navigation and advocacies are way forward for early detection.