

A Retrospective Chart Analysis of the Experiences of Breast Cancer Patients Using Telehealth

Raouf Hano*

Department of Human Physiology, College of Colchester, United Kingdom

Abstract

The most common malignant tumour in women is breast cancer. Several approaches are used in its therapy. In remote areas, telehealth can provide continuity of care. The goal of this study was to compile qualitative data on women's experiences using telemedicine for breast cancer treatment and follow-up.

Keywords: Breast cancer; Telehealth; Neoplasm

Introduction

Although breast cancer is the cancer with the highest global occurrence, managing the disease presents several difficulties. 1. There were 2.26 million new instances of the illness in 2020. The kind and stage of the tumour are just two of the many factors that influence the course of treatment. Successful management necessitates ongoing communication between patients and medical personnel. Bringing medical care closer to the patient could lead to better results [1]. Telephone interventions can be useful for treating common cancer symptoms like anxiety, exhaustion, and emotional discomfort. The improvement of telehealth as a potential tool in the care of breast cancer has been made possible by the development of information and communication technologies.

Methods

Telehealth has the potential to be used for a variety of illnesses, including their prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up. In the treatment of breast cancer, it can enhance adherence, lessen the negative effects of chemotherapy, improve post-treatment rehabilitation, and enhance emotional functioning. During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth was a crucial tool for managing patients with breast cancer because it allowed for continuity of care, including virtual appointments and remote consultation, psychological and emotional support, remote expert-guided physical activity, management of multidisciplinary teams, and even breast cancer screening [2, 3]. Although the results are encouraging, user experiences are not properly described.

Qualitative syntheses can assist the understanding of a phenomenon in depth

In this study, we aimed to evaluate and synthesize studies that used qualitative methods to describe women's experiences with telehealth during the treatment and follow-up of breast cancer. The telehealth importance has grown substantially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and knowing the patient's perspective is essential to develop better tools dedicated to improving breast cancer management [4, 5].

We performed a qualitative systematic review and meta-synthesis. This review followed PRISMA guidelines. The electronic search included 4 databases (PubMed, CINAHL, Web of Science, and EMBASE). The initial search occurred in December 2020 with no date or language restrictions. The concept map included the terms: breast cancer, telehealth, telemedicine, and qualitative study (Supplemental Files S1 and S2) [6, 7, and 8].

Discussion

This review sums up the women's telehealth experiences in relation to breast cancer treatment. The majority of encounters included asynchronous symptom management and psychological therapies. Breast cancer patients typically accept the intervention well. Telehealth helps to promote continuity of care and improve contact with medical providers. Additionally, it encourages symptom awareness and offers support for self-management [9].

Conclusion

This study demonstrated the validity and acceptance of telehealth in the diagnosis, treatment, and monitoring of breast cancer. To give these women more pleasurable experiences, various factors must be improved [10].

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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*Corresponding author: Raouf Hano, Department of Human Physiology, College of Colchester, United Kingdom, E-mail: RaoufH33@hotmail.com

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