

Social-Cultural Aspect in The Effort Healing of Breast Cancer Disease

Yunni Deswita

Universitas Andalas

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Breast cancer, healing, stigma, social aspects, cultural aspects

E-mail:

Yunni.deswita@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Breast cancer is a frightening disease for people in the city of Padang. Each year there is an increase in cases of death caused by this disease. The delay of breast cancer patients in accessing treatment is the cause of the high mortality rate. Researchers try to see what causes the delay from a socio-cultural point of view. Among them are the intervention of family members (nuclear / extended family) in deciding the treatment system to be undertaken by breast cancer sufferers and the existence of a stigma against this disease. Disease etiology and the health care system are concepts used in explaining these delays.

Copyright © 2021 Science Midwifery.

1. Introduction

Cancer is a disease that is the second leading cause of death in the world after cardiovascular disease. It is estimated that 7.5 million people died from cancer and more than 70% of the deaths were in poor and developing countries (Kemenkes RI, 2015: 13). This statement is supported by WHO data in 2013 which showed an increase in the prevalence of cancer from 12.7 million cases in 2008 to 14.1 million cases in 2012. Likewise, the number of cancer deaths increased from 7.6 million people in 2008. to 8.2 million in 2012. It is estimated that by 2030 cancer sufferers will reach 26 million people and 17 million of them will die (Depkes, 2016).

Cervical cancer and breast cancer are two of the many types of cancer that occupied the highest prevalence in Indonesia in 2013. Cervical cancer occupies the highest position at 0.8% and breast cancer at 0.5% (Kemenkes RI, 2015: 4). Breast cancer is a malignancy most often experienced by women in developed countries and is the number two problem after cervical cancer in developing countries. In the world, every three minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer and every 12 minutes a woman dies of breast cancer (Sumiatin, 2013: 1). Furthermore, Fahriza (2010: 2) explains that the early symptoms of breast cancer are often not felt or are not realized by the sufferer so that many patients who seek treatment are in an advanced state. This is what causes the high rate of cancer mortality.

In West Sumatra, the incidence rate of breast cancer is 5.6%. This figure is higher than the national average incidence rate of only around 4.3%, placing West Sumatra in sixth place out of thirty-three provinces in Indonesia (Kemenkes RI, 2015: 14). The health profile data of West Sumatra in 2017 states that the city of Padang is the area with the second highest number of breast cancer sufferers in the province after Dharmasraya District, followed by Padang Pariaman and Solok Regencies. According to data from the Padang City Health Office in 2017, out of 128,909 women in Padang City aged 30-55 years, only 10,670 women went to the puskesmas and there were 142 women with lumps.

The data above shows that the level of early screening for women who are at risk of developing breast cancer is still low. This can be seen from the number of women at risk (30-50 years) who carry out early screening is not proportional to the total number of women in Padang City. Even though early examination is highly recommended to be done so that there is no delay in knowing the condition of their breasts.

Many case findings are related to the delay in breast cancer patients in knowing or treating breast cancer. In their research, Indria, et al (2010: 2) wrote that for most women the presence of a lump in the breast itself can cause excessive anxiety, especially if cancer is detected. So they are more likely to choose not to do BSE. The delay of women in doing BSE or even not doing it at all will only make things worse. Because the early symptoms of breast cancer are often not felt or realized, only with BSE can women find out early about the disorders that exist in their breasts.

Breasts as one of the important assets of women have a value that cannot be separated from their female characteristics. As explained by Odgen (in Melva, 2016: 2), generally women see their breasts as an important part of femininity and sexual identity. In some cultures there are also sexual

Science Midwifery

Journal Homepage: www.midwifery.iocspublisher.org

stereotypes in which breasts are symbolically associated with warmth, motherhood and affection. So that if someone has a problem with their breasts such as breast cancer, it means that there is interference with their female sexual identity. This means that women who suffer from this disease are considered imperfect as women.

As a disease that is considered malignant, there are many views on this disease. In Latin society cancer (including breast cancer) provides descriptions of pain, sadness, death, worry, fear, anger, and suffering. Even breast cancer is assumed to be synonymous with death, so no action can be taken against the disease. Everything that happens due to breast cancer is the will of God. Furthermore, Kinney (in Cognetti, 2013: 17) emphasizes that breast cancer is considered a taboo disease and may be contagious and embarrassing.

In Pakistani society, women with breast cancer are considered a source of unhappiness. The negative stigma is exacerbated if the woman who has the disease is not married (still a girl). This disease is a disgrace for those who are not married because it can reduce their chances of getting married. Pakistani society believes that women with breast cancer can spread cancer cells to their children later (Banning, 2009). It is likely that with this negative stigma, women who have had breast cancer since girls have very little chance of being chosen as wives.

From some people's views on breast, breast cancer disease and sufferers, it seems that this disease is not only a medical problem, but also psychologically, socially and culturally. This is illustrated by the Scriptures (2008: 14) which states that the feelings experienced by breast cancer sufferers are very complex. Starting from feeling helpless, feeling imperfect, feeling ashamed of the shape of the breast, unhappiness, feeling unattractive, feeling isolated, afraid, grieving, failing to meet family needs, difficulty concentrating, anxiety and depression. For this reason, breast cancer sufferers need support so that they are not pessimistic in life. Support can be obtained from people who are around the sufferer (usually by the sufferer's own social network), for example husbands, children, parents, relatives, neighbors, friends, as well as health workers and others. For this reason, extensive knowledge related to breast cancer is also needed, for example knowledge about the causes, treatment, treatment and cure of the disease. This knowledge should be owned by sufferers and sufferers' social networks. In order to avoid misunderstandings during treatment and during the healing period.

2. Method

This research was conducted using qualitative methods. Data related to this research issue were obtained by means of an interview method that involved several Minangkabau women who are married and live in the city of Padang. They are women who experience lumps in the breasts and women who suffer from breast cancer, ranging from stage I-IV. In addition, this study also involved several surgical oncology specialists. The number of informants selected for breast cancer in this study were 14 people. The details of the informants are: 9 women who work as housewives, 2 women who work as civil servants and 3 women who work as private employees. Judging from the level of education, there are 7 informants with undergraduate level education, 6 high school students and 1 junior high school student. Apart from selected informants, several other informants were also interviewed such as neighbors, relatives or friends of the informants.

The focus of this research is the problem of delays in breast cancer sufferers in the city of Padang in deciding the efforts to cure the disease that they will undergo. In elaborating this issue, the researchers used the concept of health and illness, the etiology of the disease, the care system and the influence of the local socio-cultural environment related to breast cancer. The influence of this socio-cultural environment is closely related to the social network of breast cancer sufferers and their knowledge of the disease.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Breast cancer etiology

Etiology is a concept of causality which describes the existence of a disease. Anthropologically, Foster and Anderson (2009: 63-67) categorize the etiology of disease in non-Western societies into two, namely diseases caused by personalism and diseases caused by naturalism. Diseases caused by personalism are influenced by the intervention of an active agent, which can be supernatural beings

Science Midwifery

Journal Homepage: www.midwifery.iocspublisher.org

(supernatural beings or gods), non-human beings (ghosts, ancestral spirits, evil spirits), or human beings (sorcerers or sorcerers). Diseases caused by naturalism are influenced because of the imbalance of the basic elements in the human body. These elements are heat, cold, body fluids (humor or dosha), yin and yang.

In the case of breast cancer in the city of Padang, researchers will explain the two causes of the disease, namely naturalistic and personalistic. Because between the patient and the community (in the patient's environment) have differences regarding the causes of breast cancer. These differences will affect the form of treatment and healing that will be undertaken by the sufferer later.

Medically, the cause of breast cancer has yet to be ascertained, no studies have found which type of virus causes the disease. It's just that there are several risk factors that increase the incidence of this disease, including heredity, age, medical history, first pregnancy over the age of 30 years, hormonal factors and unhealthy lifestyle. Based on information from a doctor who was successfully interviewed, the researcher obtained information:

... the only cancer that has a known cause is cervical cancer, the rest is not known what virus that causes cancer is there. Likewise with breast cancer, there are many versions of the cause and it cannot be decided what the exact cause is. But the chance of getting cancer will be high if it is supported by heredity.

Based on the patient's point of view, there are several differences in understanding about the causes of breast cancer. In general, the causes are grouped into three categories. First, cancerbreast is understood by sufferers as a disease caused by breast milk that is not channeled properly. The milk gets stuck in the breast glands and causes lumps and lumps in the breast. This cause is obtained from patients who have had less than two years of experience with breastfeeding their children. This condition is caused by a patient whose child died at the age of four months, some did not breastfeed because of the demands of work and there were children who did not want to breastfeed with their mother.

The causes of both of these diseases are foods that contain lots of chemicals such as flavorings and foods contaminated with pesticides (for example: vegetables, chilies, fruits) and fast food which is very easy to find today. Currently, it is very rare to find plants that do not use pesticides. For maximum yields, farmers spray the plants in order to thrive and avoid various pests. It is possible that there are chemical substances that are still attached to plants and do not disappear even though they have been washed clean. When we consume fruits or vegetables, these chemicals enter the human body and cause various diseases, one of which is breast cancer.

Third, breast cancer is caused by an unhealthy lifestyle, environmental influences, heredity and mental factors (stress). The unhealthy lifestyle referred to by sufferers is such as lack of exercise, irregular sleep habits, irregular eating habits and others. Meanwhile, what is meant by the mind factor (stress) is caused by someone thinking too hard about existing problems, especially with economic problems which are getting more and more difficult. Especially if the problem is borne alone without any place to share complaints.

The causes of breast cancer that are conveyed by sufferers are more likely to naturalistic causes. This is in contrast to the causes of breast cancer according to the community around the sufferer. The local community explains that the cause of the disease is related to personalistic matters, namely those that are considered unseen. There are people who explain breast cancer as a curse, karma, incantations or just a disease. Curse or karma can happen anytime and anywhere. From the results of the interview, it was found that the patient's greed towards inheritance was the cause of breast cancer. Sufferers are said to have taken the oath of their ancestors and eventually developed breast cancer. Other societies also describe breast cancer as a disease "diagiah", meaning "diagiah" is sent through supernatural powers by people who feel hurt to sufferers. For example, hurt because sufferers are rude, feel disturbed by our existence or feel displeased with us.

3.2 Health Care System

The health care system is a system that integrates health-related components that include knowledge and beliefs about the causality of illness, rules, and reasons for selecting and assessing care, position and role, power, setting of interaction, institutions and types of resources and nursing practitioners available. The manifested function of this system is to mobilize the patient's resources, namely his family and community to include them in overcoming these problems (Kalangie, 1994: 25; Foster and Anderson, 2009: 46). The patient resources referred to are parents,

Science Midwifery

Journal Homepage: www.midwifery.iocspublisher.org

husbands, children, neighbors, friends around the patient. They will influence the patient in choosing the treatment system that the patient will undergo.

In anthropology, the medical system is divided into three forms, namely general health care (self-treatment), traditional (folk) and professional (Kalangie, 1994: 31-32). The general care system is a source of care that is more likely to be carried out in the treatment of diseases that are considered mild by the sufferer or his family. This system is very much influenced by the knowledge of the local community about the main treatment that must be done as the main alternative and assistant in health care. This care system is formed from the maintenance and development of knowledge, beliefs, values, rules and practices of health care, which are passed down in the process of socialization and enculturation from generation to generation as well as in the diffusion process that occurs from moment to moment. Then the traditional care system (often known as the traditional care system) involves the participation of traditional healers in the treatment of diseases by paying attention to both natural and supernatural forms in terms of etiology, therapy, and disease prevalence, physical and mental. This treatment system combines traditional (indigenous) elements and new or modern elements, such as various types of herbs and patent medicines. Meanwhile, the professional treatment system is a treatment that involves professionals or better known as modern medicine. In the next paragraph, we will describe the treatment that has been carried out by breast cancer sufferers in the city of Padang.

Breast cancer is a disease that can be detected early by doing BSE. If the cancer is detected as early as possible, the chances of it being cured are very large. But if it is detected too late, it will eventually lead to the removal of the part of the breast that is detected by cancer cells. It is even possible that both breasts are affected. In this study, two informants found out who the disease was through BSE, the rest knew the disease after feeling pain and went to the health center or hospital. It turns out that there are still many breast cancer sufferers in the city of Padang who know the disease when the disease is at an advanced stage. In addition, there are also many sufferers who already know about the disease,

For patients diagnosed with breast cancer, the most difficult thing they have to deal with is breast removal surgery. However, not all sufferers wanted to perform the operation. In general, the informants chose to carry out general treatment using ingredients obtained from generation to generation. Some of the ingredients that have been used by sufferers are a mixture of coffee parasites, soursop leaves and dragon's tail leaves. The three leaves are boiled and the boiled water is drunk. Meanwhile, there were also informants who only boiled soursop leaves. The decoction of a mixture of dragon's tail leaves, white turmeric and coffee parasites is also believed to be a remedy for breast cancer. Some even use external medicine by affixing it, in the form of betel leaf smeared with eucalyptus oil. Many informants believe the use of traditional herbs is safer than medical treatment, even though the healing period is longer.

In addition to traditional ingredients, herbal medicines are also being hunted by breast cancer sufferers in the city of Padang, from the results of interviews obtained information related to herbal medicines consumed by breast cancer sufferers, including the ZedoaRiplus brand, olive oil, and a kind of unbranded honey processed. sent from Malacca. Patients get knowledge about these drugs from the people around them.

Asking for help from a dukun is also one of the treatment options for breast cancer in the city of Padang. Those who opt for traditional healers believe that with a massage the lump in the breast will burst and the breast cancer will eventually heal. In the sense that by going to a traditional healer, they can recover without taking medication or undergoing surgery.

3.3 The influence of the socio-cultural aspects in the efforts to cure breast cancer.

The social and cultural aspects of breast cancer sufferers play an important role in the healing process of the disease. The social aspect is related to the sufferer's social network (the people around the sufferer) who play a role during the treatment of their illness. Meanwhile, the cultural aspect is related to the knowledge about breast cancer that is owned by the sufferer and the community around the patient.

The important role of social networks in influencing one's health is seen in the Iban community in Kalimantan. Foster and Anderson (2009: 43), wrote that they did not only involve the sick's family during medical ceremonies. Instead, all residents of the long house (approximately 12 family units) are involved in the ceremony. For the sick person, the importance of the role of family, relatives, neighbors and friends is seen in providing information related to illness, what

Science Midwifery

Journal Homepage: www.midwifery.iocspublisher.org

actions the sufferer should take and is very helpful in the decision-making process regarding treatment. This means that social networks have certain obligations towards patients.

The importance of the role of social networks is also found in the community in Padang City. Here the more important role is the patient's family (wife) because the Minangkabau people tend to choose to live in the vicinity of the residence of the wife's relative (uxorilokal). However, there are also those who live separately from the relatives of the wife, where the more important roles are the nuclear family and the people who live around the sufferer, family participation remains but is not too involved.

The social network for breast cancer sufferers in the city of Padang greatly influences the patient's treatment decisions. Before the patient decides on the treatment to be undertaken by himself, he must first negotiate with his relatives. This step refers to the habits of the Minangkabau people in making decisions. Likewise in making decisions for the treatment of diseases that are considered severe. Breast cancer is considered a serious disease because it is a "talatak disease", which means an illness that makes the sufferer helpless and in its treatment the patient needs help from others. One of the Minang proverbs which explains the importance of conducting deliberation is "bulek aia deck pambuluah, bulek kato deck consensus".

Based on the data findings, there are still many Minangkabau people (especially family members of sufferers) who believe in personalistic causes. Breast cancer is understood as a disease caused by the involvement of supernatural powers. They believe that breast cancer is a curse, karma, swearing in and a disease sent from other people who do not like our existence. For this reason, the presence of a family member who has breast cancer is a disgrace for the extended family, because the sufferer will be gossiped about by many people in the village. This understanding will lead to general or traditional medicine decisions.

The choice to undergo general treatment or shamanism is further strengthened by the tradition of the Minangkabau people who from generation to generation prefer this treatment. Even though the city of Padang is equipped with increasingly sophisticated health facilities and infrastructure, these facilities are still not functioning optimally. There are still Minangkabau people who think that going to the hospital is a scary thing, especially having to undergo surgery. Modern medicine is considered to have paved the way for other ailments. One of the informants said:

"It's better to seek treatment in the village! Going to the hospital will only add to the burden on your mind, when you are examined, you will definitely find other diseases. Especially if you have breast cancer, you will be immediately ordered to operate. If you have surgery, get ready to wait for death"

Judging from the patient's understanding of the causes of breast cancer, it can be categorized into naturalistic causes. In theory, if the cause of the disease is naturalistic, the treatment chosen is modern medicine, especially if the disease is a severe disease. But because general treatment and witchcraft have been agreed upon in deliberation, the patient finally decides to undergo the prescribed treatment. In addition, sufferers are afraid of the disease, especially if they have to be hospitalized. Patients feel embarrassed if their breasts have been removed, it will be a topic of conversation in the social environment. They will be labeled as imperfect women because they only have one breast, women are weak and helpless.

4. Conclusion

The patient's social and cultural environment greatly influences the patient's treatment pattern. The biggest influence is from the patient's extended family, then neighbors and friends. Patients must undergo treatment in accordance with the decisions chosen in deliberation. Helplessness due to the disease makes sufferers unable to take many actions. Even though the sufferer is aware that the illness they are experiencing is not caused by personalistic factors. But tradition has led him to stick with the chosen treatment. This proves that there is a difference in understanding regarding breast cancer between sufferers and family or community members, which causes differences in treatment decision making.

The level of education is not a determining factor in the choice of breast cancer treatment. In fact, the education level of breast cancer patients in this study is generally higher education. It should be that the higher the level of education, the more advanced the treatment pattern that will be chosen.

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that traditional medicine or traditional

Science Midwifery

Journal Homepage: www.midwifery.iocspublisher.org

medicine is not in accordance with breast cancer, which is a severe disease category. Traditional medicine will only aggravate the condition of the breast cancer that the sufferer is experiencing. And also slow the sufferer to get better treatment of modern medicine. When doing modern medicine the disease has reached an advanced stage so it takes a long time to heal.

5. References

- [1] Banning, dkk.2009. *The Impact of Culture and Sociological and Psychological Issues on Muslim Patients With Breast Cancer in Pakistan*. School of Health Science and Social Care.
- [2] Cognetti, Jade. 2013. *Percaption of Breast Cancer-Related Stigma and Genetic Knowledge Among Latina Women: El Major Etendimiento Del Miedo*. University of Shouth California.
- [3] Dinas Kesehatan Kota Padang. 2017. *Profil Kesehatan Kota Padang*.
- [4] Dinas Kesehatan Sumatera Barat. 2017. *Profil Kesehatan Sumatera Barat*.
- [5] Fahriza, Muhammad. 2010. *Hubungan Tingkat Pendidikan Wanita Usia 20-45 Tahun tentang Penanganan KankerPayudara di Kelurahan Rempoa*. Fak. Kedokteran dan Ilmu Kesehatan, Universitas Syarif Hidayatullah.
- [6] Foster & Anderson. 2009. *Antropologi Kesehatan*. UI Press : Jakarta
- [7] <http://www.depkes.go.id/article/print/201407070001/hilangkan-mitos-tentang-kanker.html>, Artikel: Hilangkan Mitos tentang Kanker, diakses dari pada 05-03-2016 pukul 11.30 WIB
- [8] Indria, Desanti O dkk. 2010. *Persepsi Wanita Berisiko Kanker Payudara Tentang Pemeriksaan Payudara Sendiri Di Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah*. Berita Kedokteran Masyarakat.
- [9] Kementerian Kesehatan RI. 2015. *Buletin Jendela Data dan Informasi Kesehatan*.
- [10] Kementerian Kesehatan RI. 2015. *Situasi Penyakit Kanker* . Pusat Data dan Informasi.
- [11] Kementerian Kesehatan RI. 2015. *Stop Kanker*. Pusat Data dan Informasi.
- [12] Melva, Connie dkk. 2016. *Pengalaman Pasien Kanker Payudara pada Suku Batak yang Menjalani Kemoterapi*. Fakultas Keperawatan: Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- [13] Suci, Arika Hartati. 2008. *Konsep Diri dan Kecemasan Penderita Kanker Payudara di Poli Bedah Onkologi RSUP H Adam Malik*. Fakultas Kedokteran: Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- [14] Sumiatin, Titik. 2013. *Hubungan Pengetahuan Dengan Upaya Pencegahan Kanker Payudara Pada Wanita Usia Subur Di Kecamatan Semanding Kabupaten Tuban*. Prodi Keperawatan, Poltekkes Kemenkes Surabaya