

## Editorial

# The Importance of Specialist Nurses for the Support of Breast Cancer Patients

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A breast cancer diagnosis includes a complex process of coping with the disease and associated different treatments. Accompanying the process, a wide range of physical and psychological issues was involved. Women with breast cancer require comprehensive nursing interventions.

Breast cancer is one of the most common malignancies in women. Although the incidence of breast cancer is on the rise, the disease has a relatively favorable five-year and ten-year survival rate. As a result, breast cancer survivors face various side effects of treatment, including physical, psychological, and social challenges. Issues include negative body image; decreased sexual satisfaction; anxiety, depression, social avoidance and distress; breast cancer-related lymphedema; and physical symptoms of chemotherapy such as hair loss, skin pigmentation, nausea, vomiting, and unhealthy lifestyle [1]. All these issues can affect patients' quality of life. Postoperative lymphedema can bring significant changes in appearance, which might discourage the confidence necessary for the fight against breast cancer and hope for a normal life [2]. Additionally, patients have difficulty in controlling negative emotions and self-management of diseases, that can be improved by a strong social support system. Nurses specializing in breast cancer should empower, encourage and help patients relieve discomfort and promote their physical and mental health in a timely and effective manner.

Nurses have a huge impact on all aspects of a patient's care. They create a unique bond that helps to provide emotional and psychological strength to breast cancer patients. The nurse's perspective and role in comprehensive management of a patient with breast cancer should be accentuated. Psychological care is beneficial to the health of patients. It helps build their mental toughness and outlook, and can even help prevent cancer recurrence [3]. Previously published data has shown that peer support is effective in promoting health-related quality of life [4,5]. Different from breast surgeons, psychologists, and rehabilitation physicians, nurses have unique advantages secondary to their close and frequent patient contact. This distinct superiority makes them unique in understanding the patients' ideas and needs. Also, nurses can serve as a bridge of com-

munication between other medical professionals and breast cancer patients. Nurses continue to advance in their professional fields by conducting research and publishing their research findings. Recognizing these multifaceted and important roles of nurses in caring for patients, this issue of Breast Cancer and Treatment provides a platform for nurses to share research and voice their opinions. In addition, genetic counseling is another important task of current breast cancer nurses [6,7]. Through genetic counseling, nurses can timely discover possible genetic problems, carry out early prevention and treatment, effectively evaluate and reasonably monitor patients who may have genetic diseases, and provide patients with health education and guidance related to genetic disorders.

A clinical nurse specialist (CNS) is a professional division of an 'advanced practice nurse' (APN). Referring to nurse colleagues who have increased theoretical knowledge, extensive clinical experience and superb clinical skills in a certain field of clinical nursing, the CNS can provide high-quality nursing services directly to patients. As an important member of the breast cancer multidisciplinary treatment team, breast cancer specialized nurses have developed rapidly in Europe and America [8]. Breast cancer specialist nurses have multiple roles in the breast cancer comprehensive treatment team. Often they are the managers of the comprehensive treatment team, provider of professional advice, and bridge the communication between the hospital and patients [8]. The importance of their work has been recognized by patients, colleagues and fully affirmed by other medical staff. A systematic review suggested that specialist nurse initiated interventions in breast cancer care can contribute to an improvement in health outcomes of women with breast cancer [9].

In this special issue, a variety of topics in breast cancer care are welcome, including (but not limited to) physical and psychological care, social functioning care and promoting healthy lifestyles.

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SH, ZL and YL made contributions to study conception and design, and SH made contribution for drafting



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