**POSTER PRESENTER**

**POSTER #7**

**IDENTIFICATION OF PATIENT AND HEALTH SYSTEM FACTORS RELATED TO EARLY AND LATE PRESENTATIONS OF BREAST CANCER IN TANZANIA**

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**BACKGROUND:** Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, and is fatal for over 56% of diagnosed Tanzanian women because of the lack of the breast cancer screening and attendance. The purpose of this study was to identify patient and health system factors that predict the presentations of early or late stages of breast cancer among female patients at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute (ORCI) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

**METHODS:** Two-hundred patients initially diagnosed with either early (stage I/II) or late (stage III/IV) stage breast cancer from January 2016 to July 2018 were recruited from ORCI. In-person interviews elicited information regarding disease history, sociodemographic characteristics, barriers in navigating the referral system, distance to chemotherapy facility, and attitudes towards breast cancer. Patient medical records were utilized to validate their medical and referral histories.

**RESULTS:** Women who were not referred for further care after first presentation of symptoms to a physician were more likely to be diagnosed with late stage (OR=3.78; 95% CI=1.58, 9.03). Financial restraints were cited to be common barriers for seeking professional care among late diagnosed women (OR=2.42; 95% CI=1.14, 5.16). Permission from a relative to be medically examined (OR=3.87) and prescription of nonspecific medical treatment such as antibiotics (OR=4.18) were associated with late presentations.

**CONCLUSIONS:** There is significant urgency to educate physicians in rural areas on referring patients for further care, rather than prescribing nonspecific medical treatment. In addition, financial support and increase patient guidance through the referral system can be implemented to decrease late diagnosis. This study identifies specific areas of breast cancer prevention that need to be targeted in educational initiatives in promoting breast cancer screenings and decreasing diagnosis delay throughout community hospital settings in Tanzania, other low-income developing countries, and low-income communities within the United States.

**CONTENT CATEGORY:** Epidemiology

**KEYWORDS:** *Global Health, Breast Cancer, Women’s Health, Cancer Epidemiology, Cancer Screening*