

Research

The Media and the Fight against Cancer: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract

The rate of cancer deaths worldwide is alarming. The threatening impact of the disease and the pain it causes victims and their families makes it more worrisome. This is why the researcher undertook a qualitative study on “The Media and the Fight against Cancer: A Critical Perspective.” With the aid of the media dependency theoretical framework, the study took a critical analysis of the role of the media in tackling cancer. While frowning at unnecessary media hype about cancer for pecuniary reasons, the study discovered that creation of awareness as well as preventive rather than curative measures could help nip the disease in the bud. It, however, recommended media campaigns, proper dieting, exercise and synergy as possible ways of fighting the scourge of cancer in the world.

Key words: Cancer; Chemotherapy; Media; Patients ;WHO

Introduction

Cancer is a major public health problem worldwide [1]. In fact, it has killed millions of people in the world. Sadly, reports in the news media do not reflect the reality of these figures [2]. Cancer patients are often left at the mercy of their families and friends who watch their loved ones die gradually in agonizing pain [3]. Even where medical care is given, the much talked about chemotherapy does not provide the needed cure [4]. For the most part, while chemotherapy provides a palliative approach to the treatment of cancer, the family of patients and care-givers often look up to God for divine intervention [5].

The issues are more pathetic in Africa where there is a huge deficit of access to proper medical care [6]. With lack of proper funding, the health sector suffers a serious setback. When people suffer diseases like cancer, they may come out of it if they are highly connected to get medical tourism abroad [7]. Even where such is accessed, lack of early detection makes the situation worse and the victims eventually die [8]. It becomes even more worrisome when it concerns the poor citizenry who have no one to sponsor them for medical trips abroad. Other life-threatening issues in Africa are lack of experts, research centers and documentation unlike the United States of America where a survey disclosed that “One of every 2 men and 1 of every 3 women will be diagnosed as having cancer in their lifetime, and approximately half of all patients with cancer will die of their illness or of related complications [2].

Germane to this paper is the argument for the preventive approach rather than the curative approach. This paper, therefore, sets before itself the task of:

1. Situating the media in the centre of the fight against cancer.
2. Arguing for more concerted efforts at preventive measures rather than curative measures which are much more expensive.
3. Simulating the media to live up to its corporate social responsibility of being the fourth estate of the realm in mobilizing and educating the public towards the fight against cancer.
4. Creating awareness in the public space on a zero tolerance towards stigmatization of cancer-victims and their families.
5. Challenging all care-givers and the media to desist from making the fight against cancer a money making venture at the detriment of saving lives.

Conceptual Clarifications

Media:

The media are organizations or agencies which provide information and facilitate effective communication of ideas to a heterogeneous audience. It provides an indispensable role of gathering and disseminating of information through educational promotion, surveillance, social enlightenment and mobilization. These functions open the media for

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a relationship with government and the governed towards integral development of the society [9]. In this paper, we shall highlight the media according to two classifications namely, traditional and new or social media.

Types of Media

Traditional Media:

Egbala broadly classifies the traditional media into the print which includes, Newspaper, Magazine, and Periodicals and the Electronic Media which include, the Radio and Television [10]. Similarly, Olukotun contends that newspapers and electronic media are not the only organs of communication. On the contrary, the scholar argues that the media is the total ensemble of popular culture, which includes mobile 7 theatres, pamphleteering, neotraditional chanted poetry and other infrapolitical vehicles of popular mobilization [11].

New Media:

The new or social media which is the latest entry into the journalism practice [10] is an internet-facilitated platform which provides users the opportunity of gathering, processing and dissemination of information to individual and large audiences. The advent of smart phones has provided an opportunity for citizen journalism through eyewitness accounts. Right from the Arab Spring, young people have demonstrated that change can take place in any society given the huge potentials of the new media.

Unlike traditional media which is supposed to be the exclusive preserve of professional journalists, new media has debuted citizen journalism thus providing a leeway for citizens to participate in governance and correcting societal ills. The social media is a portentous tool for social and behavioural change which is why the war against cancer cannot be won without engaging it head-on.

Since the media is the means by which news, information and other news materials are communicated to the public for the purpose of informing, educating and entertaining the citizenry [10], they are a sine qua non for integral development of the society. This is why the media is crucial to the fight against cancer.

Cancer :

Cancer is a disease which arises due to the proliferation of abnormal cells in the body and the abnormal growth of these cells is called tumour, i.e. cells which multiply uncontrollably and no longer function as an integral part of the body. Because healthy cells have stopped functioning and maturing normally, they do not undergo the usual process, known as apoptosis, in which normal cells are formed, mature, and live out their life span and die in an orderly fashion. On the contrary, cancer cells lose their capacity to undergo this natural process of cell death. As a consequence, they continue to divide and multiply forming visible tumors [12].

Types of Cancer:

There are over 200 known types of cancer [1]. However, for the purpose of this paper, we shall highlight the most common ones presented by an

online-medical news portal [14] which include:

Bladder Cancer:

This kind of cancer begins when urothelial cells which reside in the bladder lining change and grow out of proportion, forming a tumor which can be cancerous (fast growing) or benign (dormant). Cancerous tumor can spread to other parts of the body while benign tumors may grow but not spread. The three common identified types of bladder cancers include: Urothelial carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma [15]. Also known as transitional cell carcinoma or TCC, urothelial carcinoma begins in the urothelial cells which are found in the lining of the bladder [15]. It is said to account for about 90% of all bladder cancers [16]. Squamous cell carcinoma develops in the bladder lining in response to irritation and inflammation and within a short time, become cancerous [17]. This type of cancer accounts for about 4-6% of all bladder cancers [18]. Adenocarcinoma cancer which develops from glandular cells is said to account for about 1-2% of all bladder cancers [19].

Breast Cancer:

When normal breast cells begin to grow beyond proportion and form a mass or tumor, breast cancer is palpable [20]. Like in the case of bladder cancer, the tumor could grow and spread to other parts of the body such as the bones, lungs, liver and brain through the blood vessels in a process known as metastasis [14]. The tumor can also grow without spreading.

Breast cancer can be invasive or non-invasive [21]. The former spreads into surrounding tissues while the latter does not go beyond the milk ducts or lobules in the breast [21]. While ductal carcinoma breast cancers start in the ducts, ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) cancers are the ones located only in the duct [22]. Other less common types of breast cancers are medullary, mucinous, tubular, metaplastic and papillary breast cancers [14].

Colorectal Cancer:

Colorectal cancers occur as a result of outgrown cells in the lining of the colon or rectum which form a tumor [23]. It can be latent or manifest [14]. Colorectal cancer can be caused by genetic and environmental factors [24]. Colon cancer begins in the colon while rectal cancer which includes adenocarcinoma cancer starts in the rectum [24].

Kidney Cancer:

Kidney cancer is suspected when a healthy cell in one or two of the kidneys forms a renal cortical tumor which either grows and spreads or grows without spreading [22]. Few among the popular types of kidney cancers are, renal cell carcinoma, transitional cell carcinoma, sarcoma and wilms tumor. Renal cell carcinoma develops within the proximal renal tubules which constitute the kidney's filtration system [22].

According to Cancer.Net, this is the most common type of kidney cancer which makes up 85% of diagnoses among adults. The source also noted that transitional cell carcinoma which starts in the area of the kidney where urine collects before moving to the bladder or renal pelvis accounts for 10% to 15% of the kidney cancers is often diagnosed among adults

[14]. Sarcoma cancer develops in the soft tissue of the kidney [25]. It can be treated through surgery or chemotherapy. The most common kidney cancer found in children is called wilms tumor [26]. It can be treated with radio-therapy or chemotherapy [26]. Lymphoma cancer attacks other parts of the body like the neck, chest, and abdominal cavity [27]. While it often enlarges both kidneys, it can be addressed using a biopsy or chemotherapy [14].

Lung Cancer:

Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer, NSCLC begins when a healthy cell in the lung grows to form a tumor [28]. The cancer cells can grow and spread to other parts of the body or they can grow and remain in one place [29]. NSCLC which begin in the epithelial cells could be adenocarcinoma – that is, those that start in cells that produce mucus; squamous cell carcinoma which begin in the cells that line in the airways and large cell carcinoma which begins in cells other than adenocarcinoma and squamous [30].

Oral and Oropharyngeal Cancer:

These are the most common types of cancers that develop in the head or around the neck which makes it difficult for a patient to chew, swallow, breathe and talk [22]. This cancer attacks the oral cavity, the retromolar trigone, the small area behind the wisdom teeth and the oropharynx where the oral cavity stops [22]. Close to 100% of oral and oropharyngeal cancers are squamous cell carcinoma which begins in the flat and squamous cells that are found in the lining of the mouth and throat [14].

Pancreatic Cancer :

Pancreatic cancer occurs when a healthy cell in the pancreas stops working, grows out of proportion and becomes a tumor [31]. Pancreatic cancers can begin in the exocrine or endocrine [32] Exocrinotumors also called islet cell tumors or pancreatic neuroendocrine tumors (PNETs) being the most common type of pancreatic cancers usually start in the ducts of the pancreas, are said to make up only 1% of pancreatic cancers [14]. These are less common.

Prostate Cancer:

Unlike other cancers which spread to other parts of the body, prostate tumor rarely spread to other parts of the body [22]. Where they do, they can be managed but where proper palliatives are not given, it can lead to severe pain, fatigue or even death [22]. Unlike adenocarcinomas which are the most common forms of prostate cancers, neuroendocrine prostate cancer is more aggressive because it spreads outside [33].

Thyroid Cancer:

Thyroid cancer develops as a result of good cell in the thyroid system which change and form a mass [34]. This mass or tumor in the thyroid gland usually contains 2 types of cells namely, follicular cells and C-cells – while follicular cells are responsible for the production of thyroid hormone, C-cells make calcitonin, a hormone that participates in calcium metabolism [14]. The main types of thyroid cancers are: Papillary, follicular, medullary, anaplastic and hurthle thyroid cancer [35].

Uterine Cancer:

Also known as cervical cancer, uterine cancer is the most common form of cancer which occurs in a woman's reproductive system [28]. It is a growth or tumor which grows and spreads or keeps growing within and outside a woman's reproductive system. Uterine cancers include fibroids and other abnormal growths in the lining of the uterus or outside it [28]. It can cause infertility, miscarriage or even death [36].

There are 2 major types of uterine cancer - Adenocarcinoma which develops from cells in the endometrium and make up more than 80% of uterine cancers and endometrial serous carcinoma which are often treated like ovarian cancers; this constitutes the less common type of uterine cancers [14].

Method of Study

This study adopts the qualitative method of research which relies on existing data on the subject matter [37]. The dearth of data on cancer-related issues plus the dire need for relying on experts in the field of medicine informed this qualitative method of study as against the quantitative method which would have been more difficult given the

limitation of time, culture of secrecy and the possibility of not allowing the researcher have access to cancer patients under treatment in various medical centers [38].

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the media dependency theory also known as media system dependency theory [39]. The media dependency theory was proposed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976 [40]. This theory posits that audiences depend on media information to meet their needs and goals [41]. It holds that social institutions and media systems interact with audiences to create needs, interests and motives in individuals [39].

Communicationtheory.org provides three levels of dependence which are directly proportional to the uses. The first level is the individual who is dependent on media provided the medium satisfy his/her needs; the second level is social stability. Here, social change arising from conflicts or election forces people to re-evaluate their lives and take new decisions. This level enables the audience to reconsider their beliefs and behaviours. This increases media dependency since people are looking for information and advice; the third level being the active audience makes it possible for active audiences to choose media dependence based on their individual needs such as economic conditions, society and culture [42].

The choice of this theory is informed by its suitability to the study. Given the potency of the media to effect change in peoples' lives and the society depending on their needs, it becomes even easier for the media to serve as a catalyst for waging the war against cancer. The media dependency theory provides leverage for cancer patients, their families and the government to access the requisite knowledge and share same towards curbing the menace of cancer.

Literature Review and Discussion

Cancer: Possible Causes and Statistics of its Scourge

While the cause of cancer is put at the interaction between a person's genetic factors, the World Health Organisation, WHO [43] provides 3 categories of external causative agents of the disease which include:

- a). Physical carcinogens such as ultraviolet and ionizing radiation;
- b). Chemical carcinogens such as asbestos, components of tobacco smoke, aflatoxin food contaminant and arsenic water contaminant; and
- c). Biological carcinogens which include infections from certain viruses, bacteria or parasites.

The international organisation gave aging as another fundamental factor for the development of the disease blaming it on failure of cellular repair mechanisms to keep working as one ages [44].

This is why cancer is described as a major burden the world [45]. In fact, recent studies stress that each year tens of millions of people are diagnosed with cancer around the world with more than half of the patients eventually dying as a result of the disease [45]. Cardiovascular diseases are ranked as the number 1 cause of deaths in most countries of the world [43].

For instance, in a survey conducted in the United States of America by Fishman, Ten Have and Casarett, 1 out of every 2 men and 1 of every 3 women will be diagnosed as having cancer in their lifetime; the study also noted that half of all patients with cancer will die of their illness or of related complications [2]. The Scholars also estimated that annually, 555 500 Americans are expected to die of cancer, and as the population ages, these rates were expected to rise significantly [2]. In a previous study, elderly people were considered as the most susceptible to cancer. The research also emphasised that as population aging continues in many countries around the world, cancer will remain a major health problem [45].

This leads us to the threatening statistics of new cancer cases and deaths in the world. The GLOBOCAN database [45] has it that there were about 10,862,496 new cancer cases worldwide in 2002. Out of this number, 5,801,839 (53.4 percent) were male and 5,060,657 (46.6 percent) were female. About 45 percent were diagnosed in Asia, 26 percent in Europe, 15 percent in North America, 7 percent in Latin America, and 6 percent in Africa [45]. The statistics also indicated lung cancer (965,446 male and 386,875 female cases per year) as the most common cancer in the world [45]. This is followed by colon (550,513 males and 472,743 females), and stomach (603,003 males and 330,290 females). Breast cancer (1,152,161 new cases per year) was the number one cancer among women closely followed by cancer of the cervix (493,100 cases), and colon (472,743 cases) [45]. For men, the three most common cancers were lung (965,446 cases), prostate (679,060 cases) and stomach cancer (603,003 cases) in that order [45].

The same body gave the estimated number of deaths caused by cancer in

the world as at 2002 as 6,723,887, out of which 3,795,991 were male and 2,927,896 were female [45]. It also fingered lung cancer as a major cause of cancer deaths worldwide [45]. In same year, lung cancer amounted for 1,179,074 deaths with 848,321 males and 330,753 females [45]. This was followed by stomach cancer causing 699,803 deaths – out of this, 445,691 were males and 254,112 were females [45]. The third cause of cancer deaths was liver cancer which led to 598,412 deaths (416,926 male and 81,486 female) [45]. Among women, breast (411,093 deaths), lung (330,753 deaths), and cervix uteri cancers (273,449 deaths) were the major causes of death [45]. These were followed by lung (848,321), stomach (445,691), and liver (416,926) cancers among men [45].

In a most recent survey, WHO [46] disclosed that 8.8 million people worldwide died from cancer in 2015. That is, nearly 1 in 6 of all global deaths. The body also gave US\$1.16 trillion as the estimated total annual economic cost of cancer but stressed that 30-50% of cancers could be prevented [43]. A new research has estimated that about 270,000 women die from cervical cancer globally each year mainly from developing countries [46].

Socio-political, cultural, religious and economic factors are responsible for the alarming rate of cancer-related deaths in the world [47]. Some of these factors include, aging, improper dieting, lack of exercise, depending on old methods, the culture of secrecy concerning critical complications of the disease, reliance on curative rather than preventive measures and lack of adequate awareness on the scourge of cancer [2]. In Africa for example, infrastructural deficits such as inadequate cancer screening centres, lack of data base for high profile cases of the disease and the dearth of research are factors which contribute to cancer deaths [48].

Most importantly, illiteracy and poverty in third world countries often make some communities to accuse cancer patients of witchcraft or wizardry leading to stigmatization of victims and their families; in other cases, victims are told that they are suffering from the disease as a result of their sins [49]. Some have had to die of negligence by family and friends (Bodkin, 2017). In a situation where people in the 21st century attribute a sickness which has scientific explanations to spiritual forces, it lives much to be desired [49].

The failure of the media to play its pivotal role as a catalyst for change through advocacy, media campaigns and seeking for humanitarian support to help victims and their families have further worsened the crusade against the disease [2]. Expectedly, the media is supposed to be a driver of socio-economic and political development of any society [50]. Even in advanced countries, the over-skill of the media in terms of cashing in on the situation to make money by way of advertising fake palliatives or chemotherapy as a permanent cure for victims has neither helped the patients nor their parents [4].

Fighting the Menace of Cancer: the Task of the Media

The Critical Role of Information:

Through their reports, opinions and commentaries, the media and the journalists contribute to the growth of any society [10]. The onus lies on the media to inform the public to so as empower everyone to take self-determined action [51]. In most societies, media information is the basis for forming public opinion. It performs this function effectively by bringing news about every facet of life particularly politics. This information in turn helps the citizenry to understand government policies so as to participate actively in them for the overall development of the state [52]. This means that the media can help in passing useful tips about cancer in order to help the victims and their families.

The Indispensable Role of Education:

Since the public has the right to know [51], the media has the responsibility of educating it. The media educates the masses through agenda-building - a collective process through which the media, government and the citizens reciprocally influence one another by evolving and formulating public policies [54]. The authors contend that this is often achieved through consensus-building. In educating the public, the media situates itself as a powerful force for harnessing ideologies for the identification and definition of social agenda [53]. For instance, the implication is that the public has the right to know about cancer and its effects - The media is the organ which can help in educating the citizenry in that regard [54].

The Crucial Role of Mobilization:

The media mobilizes the citizenry by either surveying or purveying opinion polls as well as political information to better position the masses towards making informed opinions about their lives [52]. The author also noted that the media is able to get the cooperation of the people in checking the corruption of power by government officials when it mobilizes the citizenry while stressing that this reveals the surveillance role of the media as a vanguard for social change [52]. On the role of the media in curbing cancer cases, the media could mobilize the public for positive action towards the disease or help raise funds for cancer research.

Dangers of Media-Coverage on Cancer

Reviewing previous studies on the role of the media in fighting cancer with critical lenses presents us with some unwholesome media practices which constitute a big drawback to this campaign against the disease [55]. Due to the scope of this paper, we shall highlight a few such as:

1. Overt direct advertisement or marketing to patients regarding specific cancer clinical trials in the mainline print media with direct negative impact of such media onslaught on patients and their families [55].
2. Promises of fake-cancer cures on media platforms leading to direct negative consequences of creating false hopes to patients and their families that a cure is in sight when nothing of that nature exists in reality [56].

3. Due to misinformation in the news media, cancer patients and those who care for them have been inducted into behaviour which they otherwise would not undertake - behaviour that stands only to benefit the interests of those, not the cancer patients themselves [55].
4. When cancer news coverage provides an unrealistic view of reports and emphasizes survival rather than mortality, cures instead of treatment failure and adverse effects, and aggressive treatment rather than palliative alternatives [2] news-hype becomes a dangerous tool for the crusade against cancer.
5. More often than not, the news report about aggressive treatment rather than end-of-life palliative or hospice care. In fact, scientists, media critics, and the lay public repeatedly criticize the news for focusing on death [2].

Preventive And Curative Measures of Tackling Cancer

1. Current studies indicate that between 30 and 50% of cancer deaths could be prevented by modifying or avoiding risks factors which include, avoiding tobacco products, reducing alcohol consumption, maintaining healthy body weight, regular exercise for about 30 minutes daily and addressing infected-related risk factors [43,57].
2. Crucial to the fight against cancer is stopping the intake of sugar. It is suggested that without sugar in the body, cancer dies a natural death.
3. It is also suggested that blending a whole lemon fruit with a cup of water and drinking it first thing before food for about 1-3 months would make cancer disappear. This method, it is claimed, is far better than chemotherapy.
4. Another recipe which is purported to keep cancer in check is taking a mixture of 3 spoonful of organic coconut oil, morning and night. This is vital as a preventive and curative remedy.
5. Effective and affordable programmes in early diagnosis, screening, treatment and palliative care as well as taking treatment options such as surgery, medicines and radiotherapy are necessary cancer management measures [43,57].
6. In a most recent study, researchers from Imperial College London found that ten 80g portions of fruit and veg may cut the risk of cancer by 14 percent [58].
7. Dr. Elsie Isenberg-Grzeda [59] proposes a rethinking of the emotional side of the disease. He charges oncologists to maintain a positive attitude by helping patients and their families to feel that everything will be okay while allowing them to sort their feelings. He explained that the benefit of developing a positive attitude is that it gives family members and friends the feeling that hope is restored as the patient feels supported.

Before wrapping the study, we shall present the results of the study in three tables: Result of findings on the possible causes and remedies of cancer; the negative and positive roles of the media in the fight against cancer; comparative analysis of the scourge of cancer and the analysis of results.

Table 1: Result of Findings**1. A. Possible Causes and Remedies of Cancer**

Possible Causes of Cancer		Possible Remedies of Cancer	
1.	Physical carcinogens; i. e ultraviolet and ionizing radiation (WHO, 2017).	1.	Avoiding risks factors like taking tobacco products, reducing alcohol consumption, maintaining healthy body weight, regular exercise (WHO, 2017; Pudata, Subrahmanyam & Jhansi, 2011).
2.	Chemical carcinogens; i.e asbestos, components of tobacco smoke, aflatoxin food contaminant and arsenic water contaminant (WHO, 2017).	2.	Stopping the intake of sugar, taking lemon fruit blended with a cup of water first thing before food for about 1-3 months and a mixture of 3 spoonful of organic coconut oil, morning and night (WHO, 2017; Pudata, Subrahmanyam & Jhansi, 2011) and Allen, 2017).
3.	Biological carcinogens; i.e infections from viruses, bacteria or parasites (WHO, 2017).	3.	Early diagnosis, screening, treatment, palliative care; i. e surgery, medicines or radiotherapy; taking ten 80g portions of fruit and veg as well as positive thinking through supporting patients (Isenberg-Grzeda, cited in McLaughlin, 2017)

Source: Author's Views

2. B. Negative and Positive Roles of the Media in the Fight against Cancer

Positive Roles of the Media in the Fight against Cancer		Negative Roles of the Media in the Fight against Cancer	
1.	Through the critical role of providing information, (Dyikuk, 2015, 15 & Dyikuk, 2017, p.038) the media can help in passing useful tips about cancer in order to help the victims and their families.	1.	Overt direct advertisement in the media about clinical trials of cancer (Daugherty, 2002) as well as promises of fake-cancer cures negatively affects cancer patients and their families.
2.	The media can provide the indispensable role of educating the citizenry (Galadima and Goshit, 2013, p.164) about cancer and its effects.	2.	Media-misinformation which only benefits media outfits makes patients and their families to take to behaviours they would otherwise not undertake (Daugherty, 2002).
3.	Through the crucial role of mobilization (Dyikuk, 2017, p.031) the media could mobilize the public for positive action towards the disease or help raise funds for cancer research.	3.	News-hype like focusing on death constitutes a dangerous tool for the crusade against cancer (Fishman; Ten Have & Casarett, 2010).

Source: Author's Views

Table 2: Comparative Analysis

***Analysis of the Scourge of Cancer**

Previous Studies			Current Studies		
1.	2002	There were about 10,862,496 new cancer cases worldwide in 2002 (Ma & Yu, 2006).	1.	2002	There were 6,723,887 deaths caused by cancer in the world
2.	2006	Cardiovascular diseases are ranked as the second most common cause of deaths in most countries of the world (Ma & Yu, 2006).	2.	2010	1 out of every 2 men and 1 of every 3 women in the United States of America will be diagnosed as having cancer in their lifetime
3.	2006	A population aging continues in many countries around the world, cancer will remain a major health problem (Ma & Yu, 2006).	3.	2010	555 500 Americans are expected to die of cancer, and as the population ages, these rates were expected to rise significantly (Fishman; Ten Have & Casarett, 2010).
4.	2015	WHO noted that 8.8 million people worldwide died from cancer; i.e nearly 1 in 6 of all global deaths (O'Connell, 2017).	4.	2017	US\$1.16 trillion as the estimated total annual economic cost of cancer
5.	2017	30-50% of cancers could be prevented (WHO, 2017).	5.	2017	About 270,000 women die from cervical cancer globally each year mainly from developing countries (O'Connell, 2017).

Source: Author's Views

Table 3: Analysis of Results

Analysis of Results

1.	In table 1.A, possible causes of cancer are juxtaposed with corresponding remedies. The results indicate that cancer can be taken care of using pharmaceutical and natural remedies.
2.	In table 1.B, brings out the negative as well as positive roles of the media in the fight against cancer. From the results, it is safe to conclude that the positive impact of the media in curbing the menace of cancer far outweighs the negative narratives.
3.	In table 2, the comparative analysis of cancer draws from previous and current studies to indicate the scary statistics of the scourge of cancer in the world.
4.	Table 3, presents a scorecard of the analysis of results.

Source: Author's Views

Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

Establishment of Government-Sponsored Cancer Research Centers:

Governments all over the world must go beyond the use of experimental agents of the 1940s to adopting modern techniques of research and documentations that facilitate new discoveries and treatments for cancer patients. Centres like the National Cancer Institute should be established for more research aimed at tackling the menace of cancer.

Creation of Awareness:

Closely related to research is the dire need for educating the citizenry on cancer and its effects in society. This can be done cutting across primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. A well informed citizenry is a first step in the fight against the scourge of cancer as prevention, diagnosis, early detection and cure can only be achieved if people are aware of what constitutes cancer and the danger it poses to humanity. As first tutors on the home front, parents can start talking to their children about the risk of common cancers like breast cancer. The use of billboards and fliers which contain useful information about the disease is equally important in this regard.

Media-Campaigns:

Since the media plays an enviable role of forming public opinion, it has an even more crucial responsibility in creating awareness about the dangers of cancer, early diagnoses and calling on government and wilful donors to help patients access free medical care. In doing this, the media would be fulfilling its corporate social responsibility to the public as the fourth estate of the realm. This should include - tell-all cancer patient narratives, celebrity exposés, television talk shows as well as brilliant erudite poetic expressions on the meaning of cancer as an illness in our time [55] which claims many lives. Because there hasn't been much impact of social media on cancer care, [60] cancer-related media campaigns can be employed on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter just to mention a few.

This can be achieved through the advancement of cancer-related media campaigns, advertorials and debates. Scholars are of the opinion that investigators who publish their research in high-profile medical journals often enjoy media coverage of their research which they believe are often accurate. As such, in attending to cancer patients using modern techniques like cordial doctor/patient relationship, as against erstwhile techniques such as, in the back rooms of the cancer wards without informed consent, doctors and researchers on cancer have been able to catch the cameras rolling and the glare of spotlights [55].

Discouraging the Culture of Secrecy:

Medical experts and associations must fight hard to discourage the previous culture of secrecy which made doctors not to talk in any detail about the disease of cancer with their patients or the experimental agents they inject into them. As a matter of urgency, between doctors and their patients, there should be more open communication about cancer and

available treatments with patients and their families [55]. This means developing concerted efforts in tandem with acceptable modern standards which will engender trust between physicians and families of patients which will enable them to talk about the scourge of the disease and how victims can be helped.

Watching Diet and Engaging in Physical Activity:

Since excessive weight and obesity, resulting from excessive intake of calorie and physical inactivity, have been identified as causing serious health issues in many developed countries [45], it becomes important that people especially the aged, should watch what they eat and also engage in physical activity. This preventive measure is preferable to a curative means that is merely palliative and could relapse at any time.

Need for Synergy in Tackling the Menace:

In line with the global target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the World Cancer Day and International Childhood Cancer Day organised by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and observed yearly on 4 and 15 February respectively, should be used by all Governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) throughout the world to campaign for cancer victims, assure them of proper medical care and fully integrate them into society.

From the foregoing, this author proposes a combination of what he describes as hardware strategies and software strategies as ways of combating cancer. The former has to do with provision of adequate infrastructure and drugs while the latter deals with capacity building and generating data through research. A combination of these strategies might bring about the much needed respite for cancer disease.

Conclusion

We have seen that cancer-related media information which pertains to available, well-designed trials and presented in an unbiased and objective manner [55] remains key to tackling the disease. To achieve a cancer-free society, we cannot ignore the role of both traditional media and social media [60]. Bearing in mind that cancer treatment can result in long-and-short-term adverse effects, such as neuropathy, pain, hair loss and nausea, [2] proper care should be given to cancer patients.

To curb the menace of cancer in the world, there is need for accelerated progress against the disease as well as increased multinational investments in cancer research and the application of existing cancer control knowledge across all segments of the society. Advancing the fight against cancer requires continued clinical and basic research. This is dependent on funding and the application of existing cancer control knowledge across all segments of the society especially among disadvantaged groups [1] such as in Africa.

It is safe to conclude that the educational goals that ideally drive news coverage of cancer treatment and survival should equally compel news organisations to address critical issues like treatment failure, adverse events, end-of-life care and death and dying. Because cancer news

coverage is relevant to the whole of the human race, the media should routinely report about aggressive treatment and survival [2] while seeking for better alternatives to nip the disease in the bud.

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