

A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONESELF AND SOCIETY IN THE LIGHT OF STYRIA – MARIBOR CANCER SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: Styria – Maribor Cancer Society is a voluntary humanitarian association, with 30 years of tradition, and a member of The Association of Slovenian Cancer Societies. Among the NGOs, it is the oldest and a very important institution in the field of cancer prevention. The association operates according to professional guidelines and cooperates with all who are dealing with this disease on a professional or non-professional level. The Association of Slovenian Cancer Societies connects 11 regional associations. Among the basic national documents, important for the guideline of the Cancer Societies, is the 10-year annual program of the Association of Slovenian Cancer Societies 2010 - 2020. Regarding to the European Code against Cancer, our regional association pursues objectives such as awareness of lay and professional public about cancer risk factors, opportunities for prevention and early detection, as well as highlighting the importance of cancer screening programs. Promotion of the eleven principles of the European Code against Cancer is one of the tasks of the European Partnership for Action against Cancer, too. Styria - Maribor Cancer Society conducts different activities at international milestones, such as the World Cancer Day, the month of the fight against breast cancer, the European Week for prevention of cervical cancer, etc. The activities include promotion of socially responsible attitude of individuals and society. Some will be presented in this paper. The socially responsible triangle, consisting of the NGO sector, responsible individual and responsible society (society of responsible individuals), can contribute to planned 25 percent reduction of premature death related to cancer and other chronic non-communicable diseases in the world by the year 2020.

Key words: Healthy lifestyle, cancer prevention, responsible individual, responsible society, society of responsible individuals.

ZDRAV NAČINA ŽIVLJENJA KOT DRUŽBENO ODGOVOREN ODNOS DO SEBE IN DRUŽBE V LUČI DELOVANJA DRUŠTVA ZA BOJ PROTI RAKU ŠTAJERSKE – MARIBOR

Povzetek: Društvo za boj proti raku Štajerske-Maribor je prostovoljno humanitarno združenje s 30 letno tradicijo. Med nevladnimi organizacijami je najstarejši nosilec preventive na področju raka. Deluje po strokovnih smernicah in sodeluje z vsemi, ki se na strokovni ali laični ravni ukvarjajo s to boleznijo. Je član Zveze slovenskih društev za boj proti raku v katerega povezuje 11 regijskih društev. Med temeljne nacionalne dokumente iz katerih izhajajo cilji delovanja mariborskega društva in ostalih članic zveze spada 10 letni program Zveze slovenskih društev za boj proti raku pod imenom Slovenija proti raku 2010 - 2020. Ob upoštevanju Evropskega kodeksa boja proti raku društvo zasleduje cilje, kot so: osveščanje laične in strokovne javnosti o dejavnih tveganja raka, možnostih preprečevanja in zgodnjega odkrivanja ter poudarjanje

pomena presejalnih programov za raka. Promocija enajstih načel iz Evropskega kodeksa proti raku, je tudi ena izmed delovnih nalog Evropskega partnerstva za boj proti raku. Društvo ob mednarodnih mejnikih kot so: Svetovni dan boja proti raku, ki ga obeležujemo 4. februarja, Mesec boja proti raku na dojkah, ki ga obeležujemo v mesecu oktobru, Evropski teden preprečevanja raka na materničnem vratu, ki ga obeležujemo v mesecu januarju, itd, s svojimi aktivnostmi predstavlja javnosti zdrav načina življenja kot družbeno odgovoren odnos do sebe in družbe kot celote. Nekaj od njih bo v prispevku tudi predstavljeno. Družbeno odgovoren trikotnik, ki ga sestavljajo nevladni sektor, odgovoren posameznik in odgovorna družba (družba odgovornih), lahko pripomore k načrtovanemu 25 odstotnem zmanjšanju števila prezgodnjih smrti zaradi raka in drugih kroničnih nenalezljivih bolezni po svetu do leta 2020.

Ključne besede: zdrav način življenja, preventiva na področju raka, odgovoren posameznik, odgovorna družba, družba odgovornih.

Introduction

As a starting point, we should focus on the essence of the term self-care. Self-care refers to actions and attitudes which contribute to the maintenance of well-being and personal health and promote human development. In terms of health maintenance, self-care is any activity of an individual, family or community, with the intention of improving or restoring health, or treating or preventing disease. Furthermore, it must not be overseen that the concept of self-care is directly connected to the terms like: healthy lifestyle, cancer prevention, responsible individual, responsible society, society of responsible individuals, health promotion etc. They all include health decisions of people in order to get and stay physically and mentally fit. This includes exercising to maintain physical fitness and good mental health, as well as eating well, practicing good hygiene and avoiding health hazards such as smoking and drinking. According to World Health Organization (WHO), health promotion “is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behaviour towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions” (World Health Organization). And that is exactly what Styria – Maribor Cancer Society as a voluntary humanitarian association in the field of cancer and health prevention is doing for the last 30 years.

Modern medicine offers many medications and techniques for overcoming health problems. Modern medicine recognizes many factors, which can affect the health of each individual. Some of them cannot be “controlled”, for example genetic makeup or age. But each individual can influence his or her own health, by taking steps toward healthy living. In order to do this, he or she must maintain a healthy weight, eat a variety of healthy foods, be physically active, avoid tobacco products, avoid too much sun, avoid alcohol or drink alcohol in moderation, control blood pressure and cholesterol, etc. It is not surprising that the health promotion, consisting of the NGOs and government go hand in hand, pursuing the same goal – to minimize health problems of the population. Health promotion should go beyond health care, by putting health on the agenda of policy makers and decisions at all levels, directing them to be aware of the health consequences of their decisions and to accept their responsibility for being healthy. This is where the “socially responsible triangle”, including the NGO sector, responsible individual and responsible society, can step into the arena of health.

That is exactly what CSR definition by ISO 26000 implies. “The willing inclusion of an organization for the impacts of its decision and activities on society and the environment, through transparency and ethical behavior that:

1. Contribute to sustainable development , including health and welfare of society
2. Takes into account the expectation of stakeholders
3. Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior
4. Is integrated throughout the organization and practices in its relationship” (ISO 26000).

The international standard on social responsibility (SR) provides global guidance for healthcare organizations of all types and focuses on seven key aspects of social responsibility: organizational governance, community involvement and development, environment, fair operating practices, consumer issues, labour practices and human rights.

Green paper defined CSR as a term attached only to companies. ISO 26000 generalizes this concept to all stakeholders. Both documents still underline the “voluntary” approach.

Let's take a closer look at health promotion!

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over and to improve their health (Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, 1986, p. 2). Health Promotion is the art and science of helping people discover the synergies between their core passions and optimal health, enhancing their motivation to strive for optimal health, and supporting them in changing their lifestyle to move toward a state of optimal health (O'Donnell, 2009). Dynamic balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health results optimal health. Physical health can be obtained or restored by physical activities, right nutrition, medical self-care, and control of substance abuse. Emotional health can be obtained or restored by stress management, managing the emotional crisis. Social health can be obtained or restored by partners, friends, family, and communities. Spiritual health can be obtained or restored by love, hope, charity. Intellectual health can be obtained or restored by education, achievements, career and development.

Some other researchers established that political, economic, cultural, social, environmental, behavioural and biological factors can favour health or be harmful to it.

Picture 1: The elements of Health Promotion



Source: Michael P. O'Donnell (2009), "Definition of Health Promotion"

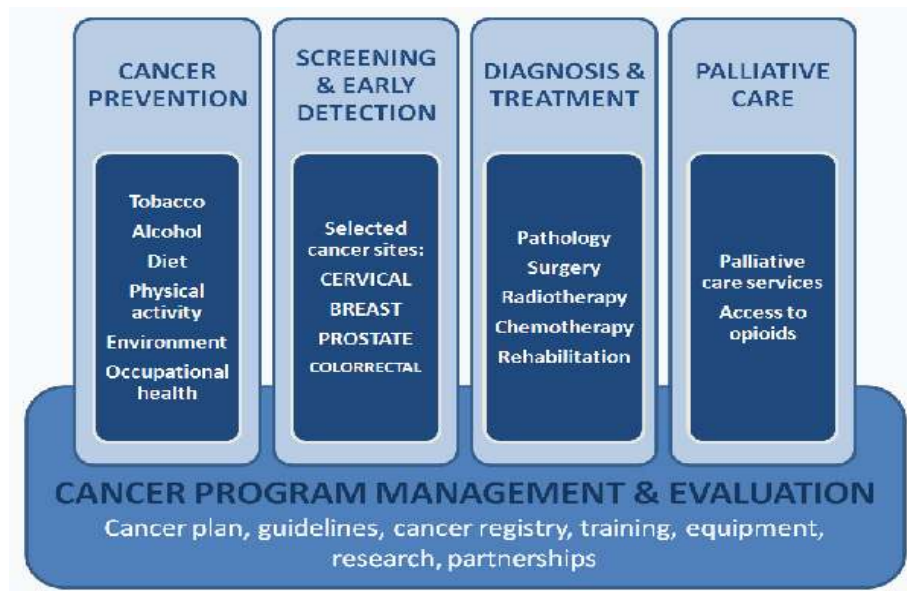
The Free Dictionary defines prevention (in nursing care) as actions directed to preventing illness and promoting health to reduce the need for secondary or tertiary health care. Prevention includes nursing actions such as assessment, including disease risk; application of prescribed measures, such as immunization; health teaching; early diagnosis and treatment; and recognition of disability limitations and rehabilitation potential. In acute care nursing, many interventions are simultaneously therapeutic and preventive (The Free Dictionary). A preventive healthcare or preventive care consists of measures taken to prevent diseases or injuries and not curing them or treating their symptoms.

The report of National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on the "Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth, and Young Adults: Research Advances and Promising Interventions" states, that definitions of prevention are important for identifying the potential contribution of prevention approaches, not only to prevent disorder, but also to promote positive mental, emotional, and behavioural health (Prevention of Mental Disorders and Substance Abuse Among Children, Youth, and Young Adults).

According to American Cancer Society, a substantial proportion of cancers could be prevented, especially cancer caused by external factors like tobacco, chemicals, alcohol, unhealthy food, etc. The avoidance of risk factors, early detection of cancer and fast reaction can and will reduce the risk of being diagnosed with cancer in the first place.

The possibility to cure breast cancer can be high, as long as the cancer is detected early enough. Therefore, detection of breast cancer by a woman herself, with the help of regular and proper breast self-examination, is very important. Orientated on this form of self-help or health prevention are the workshops/lectures, conducted by Doctor Vera Feguš, president of the Styria – Maribor Cancer Society, who has 30 years of professional experience in the field of oncology and other medical expertise. In the year 2008, she was nominated for the "doctor of the year".

Picture 2: PAHO Cancer program management



Source: Pan American Health Organization (<http://www.paho.org/>)

The objectives of the Styria – Maribor Cancer Society

Styria – Maribor Cancer Society is a voluntary humanitarian association with 30 years of tradition, and is a member of The Association of Slovenian Cancer Societies. The Slovenian Cancer League was established in year 1971. Since 1984, the league acts as the Slovenian Association of Cancer Societies. The aim of the Cancer League was to raise awareness about cancer, about the first signs and symptoms of the disease, and healthy lifestyle, thus contributing to decrease the morbidity and mortality from cancer. Among the NGOs, it is the oldest and a very important institution in the field of cancer prevention. The Styria – Maribor Cancer Society is a non-profit organisation, founded more than 30 years ago by Roman Glazer, MD and caring members. The actions of the Styria – Maribor Cancer Society can be divided into 4 groups: support services (for people with cancer and their family members, palliative care of cancer patients), information services (lectures, booklets, leaflets, tapes, videos, the website), health promotion (education, workshops, advocacy, policy, communication, projects), and donations (donations, fund-raising).

Cancer accounts for over one-fourth of all deaths in OECD countries. Because the population is ageing, cancer is a common disease in Slovenia. In year 2010, 12.896 patients were diagnosed with cancer. Every year, 1.100 female patients in Slovenia are diagnosed with breast cancer. About 48.000 female patients are diagnosed with breast cancer in Britain each year (NHS Choices health news, 2014). According to Wikipedia, breast cancer is more than 100 times more common in women than in men (Wikipedia, 2014). Being diagnosed with cancer is a crisis that tests each individual and those close to him or her. No country in the world is so rich, that its budgetary resources would be enough to satisfy all the requirements of the fight against cancer. No matter how developed the health care is, the society or the state alone cannot perform all the tasks that this fight imposes (Styria – Maribor Cancer Society, 2013).

To prevent this negative trend, the Styria – Maribor Cancer Society through its activities promotes the “11 Commandments” for cancer prevention, whose origin we can find in the European Code against Cancer:

- “1. Do not smoke; if you smoke, stop doing so. If you fail to stop, do not smoke in the presence of non-smokers.
2. Avoid Obesity.
3. Undertake some brisk, physical activity every day.

4. Increase your daily intake and variety of vegetables and fruits: eat at least five servings daily. Limit your intake of foods containing fats from animal sources.
 5. If you drink alcohol, whether beer, wine or spirits, moderate your consumption to two drinks per day if you are a man or one drink per day if you are a woman.
 6. Care must be taken to avoid excessive sun exposure. It is especially important to protect children and adolescents. For individuals who have a tendency to get sunburnt, active protective measures must be taken throughout life.
 7. Apply strict regulations, aimed at preventing any exposure to known cancer-causing substances. Follow all health and safety instructions on substances which may cause cancer. Follow advice of national radiation protection offices.
 8. Women from 25 years of age should participate in cervical screening. This should be within programmes with quality control procedures in compliance with "European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening".
 9. Women from 50 years of age should participate in breast screening. This should be within programmes with quality control procedures in compliance with "European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Mammography Screening".
 10. Men and women from 50 years of age should participate in colorectal screening. This should be within programmes with built-in quality assurance procedures.
 11. Participate in vaccination programmes against hepatitis B virus infection.
- Prevention, early detection and treatment remain the basic routine to reduce the burden of cancer (European Code against Cancer)".

What are Art Therapy Workshops?

Not only cancer patients, but patients in general may encounter some difficulties when talking about their disease. Not all communication with patients is verbal. Much can be achieved without saying a word. Styria – Maribor Cancer Society believes in the importance of the existence and development of individual self-esteem. In collaboration with the artist – instructor Nataša Grandovec, Styria – Maribor Cancer Society has developed the so called "Art Therapy Workshops" for individuals who are faced with this cruel diagnosis – cancer, in order to improve self-esteem and to encourage a positive look on life. The American Art Therapy Association states: "Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses art media, the creative process, and the resulting artwork to explore the feelings, reconcile emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behaviour and addictions, develop social skills, improve reality orientation, reduce anxiety, and increase self-esteem of individuals of all ages" (The American Art Therapy Association). The individual-oriented approach takes into account the patients skills and abilities, and also his interests, desires and values. Objectives that we pursue in our project are aimed to maximize the individual carrying out daily activities, maintaining and improving the patients' abilities and skills as well as greater patient involvement in social activities and society. According to the Wegerer Art therapy, this will not eliminate the illness, but it can stimulate the brain in a new direction. The creativity and happiness that art brings can make all the difference in the life of a patient (A Place for Mom, 2013). Creative art therapies share a commitment to generate creative energy as a healing force (McNiff, 2005). Art Therapy Workshops were also created to find the answer to the question of what the likely issues, concerns and feelings of the participants (cancer patients) in the Art Therapy Workshops are.

After discharge from the hospital, medical centre or rehabilitation institution, one finds himself again in the home environment. Health and disease are the result of physiological and psychological processes, affected by socio-economic and cultural factors. They can have a positive impact on the well-being of someone who has been forced to deal with a negative diagnosis - cancer. This diagnosis often gives individuals confronted with it a feeling of helplessness and (non-)control over their lives. Art therapeutic treatment after the rehabilitation is of utmost importance since it is the initial phase for the personal development of a patient, who has had to deal with such a diagnosis. A lot of cancer patients are left without rehabilitation assistance or extended moral support when they return to their home environment. They can also be seen as indirect patient care services in a variety of practice.

Health promotion, patient safety, disease prevention and other cancer patient oriented services performed by Styria – Maribor Cancer Society remain the "back bone" of the Styria – Maribor Cancer Society.

Nataša Grandovec was born in 1973 in Maribor. In 1998, she began to study design and jewellery techniques at the University of Guildhall in London (now Metropolitan University), which she finished in 2000 and received a diploma of the first degree - Higher National Diploma. In the same year, she continued the studies at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, where in 2002 she obtained the title of Bachelor of Fine Arts.

In order to develop a successful therapeutic relationship, we make groups of up to five participants (cancer patients). In the Art Therapy Workshops, the participants:

1. Familiarize themselves with basic materials.

2. Recognize a variety of techniques which will shape jewellery.
3. Learn the basics of the art of jewellery design.
4. Produce the final piece of jewellery.

It is therefore more than adequate the written saying on the website of the freelance artist Nataša Grandovec: “At the heart of nature, in the nature of ideas, from ideas to form the shape of a life”.

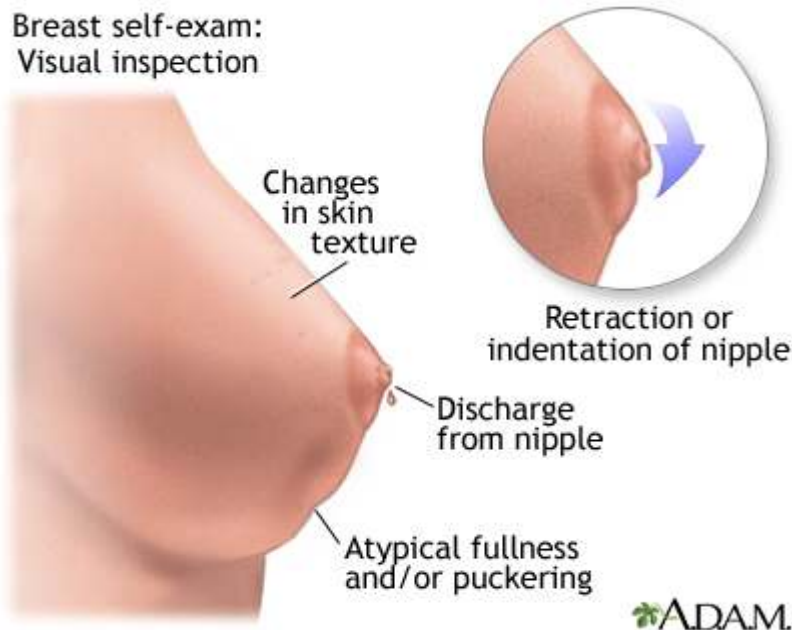
How the Art Therapy Workshops can help cancer patients was also presented in the Morning show on the first channel of TV Slovenia in Maribor studio, and was covered through media like Bonbon and Večer. Based on this good practice model and its results, Styria – Maribor Cancer Society has decided to continue Art Therapy Workshops in the next year.

Experiences with the breast self-examination workshops

Each woman can make a difference in the fight against cancer by staying physically active, maintaining a healthy weight, limiting alcohol and tobacco use, taking regular screenings, and by practising breast self-examination (BSE). The web page of the National Institute of Health – MedlinePlus, defines breast self-exam as a check-up that a woman does at home to look for potential changes or problems in the breast area (MedlinePlus, 2014). While mammograms can help a woman to detect cancer before she can feel a lump, breast self-exams practise can help women to be familiar with their breasts. To know how they look and feel like when they are “all right”, so she can alert her doctor or a doctor specialist (family physician or gynaecologist) in the case of any changes. Women are encouraged to perform BSE at least once a month. Adult women in postmenopausal period should establish a routine of BSE once a month. Although the breast problems like cancer are extremely rare in teen girls, younger women should begin with breast self-exams in their twenties to become familiar with their breasts and to react if they notice some abnormal signs listed by the National Breast Cancer Foundation like nipple tenderness or a lump or thickening in or near the breast or underarm area, a change in the skin texture or an enlargement of pores in the skin of the breast, a lump in the breast (National Breast Cancer Foundation, 2014).

According to Tavafian, Hasani, Aghamolaei, Zare and Gregory (Women's Health, 2009), BSE becomes an important and necessary approach to detecting this disease in its early stages in order to limit its resultant morbidity and mortality. A study conducted by a student Nina Preglav in year 2009 in the form of surveys was carried out in gynaecological clinics in Carinthia (ZD Radlje, ZD Dravograd, ZD Ravne na Koroškem and in ZD Slovenj Gradec). The findings of these study show that in most gynaecological clinics in Carinthia, leaflets and posters about breast cancer are sufficient almost everywhere, but medical models of breast self-examination not. The situation has improved since then, however the knowledge of BSE by women remains “relatively modest” (Preglav, 2009). Also of interest are the results of the authors Hoyer and Mivšek, who in the original research article entitled “Breast self-examination - comparison of younger and older women” (2008) conclude that knowledge of breast self-examination, knowledge of risk factors for breast cancer, and the identification of breast cancer is greater in older women. All the women surveyed (sample 100) have expressed a desire for more information.

Picture 3: Breast self-exam symptoms



Source: MedlinePlus

Because of these facts, Styria – Maribor Cancer Society decided to be active in promotion of breast self-exam practises in a form of workshops. To do so, Styria – Maribor Cancer Society managed to purchase a “Human Breast Cancer Self-Exam Model” made from synthetic tissue that feels just like a real breast, and has lumps that simulate how to find breast tumours. Medical experts, in this case the president of Styria – Maribor Cancer Society, Vera Feguš, MD and her assistants, regularly organize workshops in order to perform breast self-exams for (mostly) female participants.

Conclusion

Although the importance of corporate social responsibility is generally accepted, there are still many definitions of social responsibility. Taking responsibility is not easy. New health conditions have emerged through technological development and modern lifestyle. Some diseases are so severe, that that all sectors of society are called to address them. Cancer is one of such new-age chronic disease. Societies in the world are ageing. This produces a need not only to improve the quality of life on the medical level, but enabling all generations to be proactive in all what they do. In order to further strengthen this socially responsible process, the socially responsible triangle of responsible non-governmental sector, responsible individual and responsible society must be established. Non profit healthcare institutions are promoting health to the community. With the increased focus on the potential patient an emphasis on social responsible programs can increase individuals satisfaction while improving health and decreasing the disease footprint. Programs like Dora, Zora, Svit, self-examination workshops, art therapy workshops can significantly decrease disease rate while increasing patient satisfaction. That kind of programs can improve patient comfort while also providing an opportunity to educate patients about healthier lifestyle. Although non-governmental organizations like Styria – Maribor Cancer Society and society as such have an important role in health prevention or health protection, the decision-making process of each individual to live healthier, represents the “first step in the right (healthier) direction”. Community health, employee health and a health of each individual should be an integral part of creating a healing environment. Social responsibility is a proactive concept that should be incorporated at all levels of health planning, health execution, and health stakeholder interaction.

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