IMPLEMENTATION OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY OPTIMISATION CLINIC FOR CANCER PATIENTS WITH COMPLEX NEEDS

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BACKGROUND

- Between 1982–1987 and 2006–2010, five-year survival from all cancers combined increased from 47% to 66%¹.
- Diagnosis of & treatment for certain cancers comes with high likelihood of experiencing severe deconditioning, malnutrition, fatigue & distress.
- Australian & UK survivorship guidelines recommend the use of specialist services for complex problems arising from cancer treatment^{2, 3}.
- An optimisation clinic for cancer patients with complex needs was introduced at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in August 2017.
- The clinic provided up to 8 weeks of nutritional counselling, exercise prescription, fatigue management & psychological support.

AIM

- This study aimed to assess the feasibility of implementing the optimisation clinic into clinical practice.

METHOD

- A mixed methods implementation study for patients referred to the optimisation clinic, August 2017 to December 2018.
- Implementation outcomes: adoption (intention to try & patient uptake), fidelity (attendance & adherence) , acceptability and appropriateness.
- Evaluated using operational data , medical records & patient interview data.

Figure 1: Intention to try & patient uptake results

RESULTS

- Adoption was acceptable: 88% (n=162) of referred patients agreed to screening & 71% (n=74) of eligible patients agreed to participate in the clinic.
- Fidelity was mixed, secondary to inpatient admissions and disease progression interrupting patient participation.
- An individualised program was developed for every patient, however only 44% of patients attended 2 or more of their scheduled appointments.
- Compliance with outcome assessment was variable at program commencement (dietetic, 95%; physio, 91%; OT, 33%; quality of life, 23%) and low at program completion (dietetic, 32%; physio, 13%; OT, 10%; quality of life, 11%) mainly due to non-attendance.
- Analysis of patient interviews revealed a high satisfaction and perceived appropriateness of the clinic.

DISCUSSION

- Adoption of the clinic was successful. Interview responses suggest patients feel the optimisation clinic is both acceptable and appropriate. This indicates a multidisciplinary clinic model is an important aspect of comprehensive, timely & effective care.
- However, fidelity was low secondary to the complexities of this patient cohort.
- More appropriate outcome measures are being considered to provide more meaningful measurement of clinic benefit to patients.

REFERENCES

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