MASCC Nutrition & Cachexia Study Group Needs Assessment Survey to determine the Views, Practices & Behaviours of Healthcare Professionals working with Patients in the Cancer Setting.

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Introduction

Oncology clinicians support the nutritional management of cancer patients thus improving their nutritional status, quality of life and reducing morbidity. The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes, practices and behaviours of the MASCC Nutrition and Cachexia Study Group as well as clinicians from other health professional organisations.

Methods

An online survey was disseminated through the mailing lists of MASCC and multiple healthcare organisations over 3 months. The survey consisted of 46 questions with a mixture of Likert scale and open-ended questions, and respondents could select common issues from a supplied list as well as providing “other” options.

Results

We received 232 responses from 22 countries; the majority of clinicians being: Dietitians (34%), Physicians (16%) and Nurses (12%). The greatest challenges were health services barriers (37%), health literacy of patients (34%) and inconsistent patient followup (40%). Qualitative data indicated inconsistent health messaging between the professions, a need for better interdisciplinary action and common interdisciplinary resources.

Most (95%) clinicians had nutrition screening in their facilities and half felt confident in its use (major nutrition screening tools being: MST (45%); PG-SGA SF (12%); and MUST (9%).

The most common nutrition assessment tools were PGSGA (35%) and SGA (23%). Body composition (BIA (12%) and CT scans (6%)) and hand grip strength (16%) were less frequently used.

Mainnutrition Screening Tool

1. Have you / the patient lost weight recently without trying?

No 0
Unsure 2
Yes, how much (kg)?
1-5 1
6-10 2
11-15 3
>15 4
Unsure 2

2. Have you / the patient been eating poorly because of a decreased appetite?

No 0
Yes 1

Total Score

Scored Patient-Generated Subjective Global Assessment (PG-SGA)

History (Boxes 1-4 are designed to be completed by the patient)

1. Weight (See Worksheet 1)
In summary of my current and recent weight:
I currently weigh _____ kg
I am about _____ cm tall
month ago I weighed about _____ kg
Six months ago I weighed about _____ kg
During the past two weeks my weight has:
☐ decreased ☐ not changed ☐ increased

2. Food Intake: As compared to my normal intake, I would rate my food intake during the past month as:
☐ very poor ☐ poor ☐ normal ☐ good ☐ very good
I am now taking:
☐ normal food but less than normal ☐ little solid food ☐ only liquids ☐ only nutritional supplements ☐ very little or nothing ☐ only tube feeding or only nutrition by vein

3. Symptoms: I have had the following problems that have kept me from eating enough during the past two weeks (check all that apply):
☐ no problems eating ☐ no appetite, just did not feel like eating ☐ nausea ☐ vomiting ☐ constipation ☐ diarrhea ☐ dry mouth ☐ feeling full ☐ feeling bloated ☐ feeling tired ☐ feeling weak ☐ feeling dizzy ☐ feeling hot ☐ feeling cold ☐ feeling itchy ☐ feeling sore ☐ feeling numb ☐ feeling pain ☐ feeling other

4. Activities and Function: Over the past month, I would generally rate my activity as:
☐ normal with no limitations ☐ not my normal self, but able to be up and about with fairly normal activities ☐ not feeling up to most things, but in bed or chair less than half the day ☐ able to do little activity and need a lot of help ☐ of the day in bed or chair ☐ unable to get out of bed

Examples: depression, anxiety, or dental problems

Additive Score of the Boxes 1-4

Conclusion

This survey provides a baseline summary of the knowledge, behaviour and needs of a cohort of international and multidisciplinary oncology clinicians which can be used to target the development of interdisciplinary guidelines and oncology nutrition education.