



A pilot intervention to understand primary care physicians' perspectives towards survivorship care in order to improve communication between primary care and oncology

Background

- With number of cancer survivors projected to increase to 20.3 million by 2026, there is a demand for improved communication between oncologists and primary care providers (PCPs) to manage the needs of cancer survivors.
- Survivorship care plan (SCP) is a tool for communication between oncology and primary care.
- Most PCPs do not receive education during their training regarding the importance and utility of SCPs in the care of cancer survivors.

Purpose of the study:

- To examine the effect of a short, in-person, primary care-directed presentation to improve the communication between oncology and primary care and to explore barriers and facilitate the communication between providers and the patients

Methods

- A mixed methods approach was used to assess the knowledge base of PCPs and their staff regarding SCP, and to evaluate the effect of a brief presentation to understand primary care perspective towards improving communication between oncology and PCPs.
- Target population: PCPs (University of Arizona Family Medicine and Internal Medicine residents and attendings) and their clinic support staff.
- A paper-based survey was developed to determine the baseline knowledge of PCPs and their staff regarding cancer survivors and SCPs.
- A brief, in-person presentation followed by open discussion was conducted by the study team with the residents as well as faculty in family and internal medicine departments.
- Post-intervention surveys were conducted to assess the effect of the intervention.
- These surveys included closed and open-ended questions.

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Table 1: Baseline data

Variable	Frequency (%)
Type of Provider	
Faculty	17 (22.08%)
Trainee physician	59 (76.62%)
Year 1	25 (42.37%)
Year 2	17 (28.81%)
Year 3	6 (10.17%)
Missing	11 (18.64%)
How long in your current role?	
< 3 years	68 (88.31%)
3~5 years	3 (3.90%)
5~10 years	3 (3.90%)
> 10 years	3 (3.90%)
Have you received SCP?	
Yes	4 (5.19%)
No	49 (63.64%)
Not sure what a SCP is	24 (31.17%)

Table 2: Proportion of correct responses in the pre and post-test

Question	Pre-test (n=77)	Post-test (n=71)	Post – Pre
What information should SCP contain?	48 (62.34%)	67 (94.37%)	32.03%
Who should receive SCP?	46 (59.74%)	62 (87.32%)	27.58%
Which cancer patients must be provided with SCP?	7 (9.09%)	21 (29.58%)	29.49%
When should the patient be provided with SCP?	4 (5.19%)	7 (9.86%)	4.67%
Do you know where to find SCP in in the electronic medical record?	5 (6.49%)	63 (88.73%)	82.24%

Results

- A total of 96 individuals were surveyed (77 providers and 19 staff).
- In the pre-intervention survey, 63% of providers indicated they had never received an SCP and 31% indicated they did not know what an SCP was.
- The proportion of participants providing correct answers to questions in the pre-survey asking them about appropriate content and recipients of the SCP were 62.3% and 59.7% respectively.
- Comparative proportions of the same questions in the post surveys were 94.3% and 84.3%, demonstrating an effect size of 32% and 27.6% respectively.
- Response to open ended questions could be classified in three groups: 1) To extend direct communication between oncology and primary care to increase awareness, 2) SCP to be tailored to the provider and 3) To utilize the capacities of the electronic medical record system to improve communication between oncology and primary care.

Conclusion

- There is lack of awareness among primary care providers regarding the role of survivorship care plans.
- PCPs are keen to improve communication with oncology in order to optimize survivorship care