1274 POSTER

The Swedish Cancer Society's helpline - a complement to the health care system. The satisfaction of patients and relatives/friends

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Introduction: Since 1994, The Swedish Cancer Society offers patients with cancer, relatives/friends and others, cancer information and psychosocial support through a telephone helpline.

Aim: To study the reasons for cancer patients and relatives/friends to call and their perceived satisfaction with the Swedish Cancer Society's helpline.

Method: A study specific questionnaire was developed and used. It included 20 questions, 13 were in the form of a four-point category scale and seven were open-ended questions. The questions concerned satisfaction with received information and psychosocial support. All patients and relatives/friends who called the helpline during two and a half months were asked to answer the questionnaire. A total of 392 persons completed the form (61% response rate) of which 50% were patients and 50% were relatives/friends. The group of relatives/friends consisted of more women, were younger and had a higher level of education compared to the group of patients.

Result: The results showed that the patients and relatives/friends were very satisfied with the contact with the helpline of the Swedish Cancer Society. No differences were found between the two groups or between men and women. The participants were especially satisfied with the psychosocial support received from the staff and their competence. To be given enough time for the conversation was also appreciated. Information about cancer, its treatment and care were the main reasons for calling the helpline. More relatives/friends than patients called to receive psychosocial support. Another reason for calling the helpline was dissatisfaction with the health care system in Sweden.

Only a few persons were discontent with something in the contact with the helpline. Suggestions of improvement were e.g. increased accessibility of the helpline and in depth information about a certain cancer disease and its treatment. There was also a request of increased marketing of the helpline's existence.

Conclusion: This study confirms that the helpline is a valuable complementary to the Swedish health care system for patients with cancer and their relatives/friends regarding information about cancer and psychosocial support.

1275 POSTER

The cancer information centre, does it work?

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The NHS Cancer Information Strategy (DOH 2000)recognises the importance of information walk-in centres as part of a comprehensive approach to information provision. CancerBACUP is the UK's leading cancer information charity. In 1998, CancerBACUP joined forces with Nottingham City Hospital Trust to create a walk-in cancer information centre. Five years on, the centre is flourishing and has dealt with enquiries from more than 7000 people affected by cancer. The Nottingham City Hospital Trust (NCHT)is a large teaching hospital with 1100 beds, incorporating a regional cancer centre. The CancerBACUP centre offers access to high quality information booklets and factsheets. More importantly, a cancer information nurse specialist gives individual attention to anyone requiring information, support and advice on any aspect of cancer. By complementing the cancer services offered at NCHT, the service is now regarded as integral to comprehensive patient/relative care. The multi-professional cancer team appreciates the resources of the CancerBACUP centre and has confidence in the professionalism of its staff. Extensive CancerBACUP resources including an in-house database, library and research department enable the Nottingham centre CancerBACUP nurses to achieve a high standard of patient care. As part of a comprehensive professional programme, the nurse is also required to take part in reading and critiquing research articles, conferences, study days, in-house training and has regular clinical supervision. As well as patients and carers, health professionals benefit from the centre nurse's expertise in information provision. The CancerBACUP nurses have unique skills and knowledge. They are regularly asked to speak on medical and nursing courses run by Nottingham University and to macmillan nurses, local hospices and cancer support groups. Staff from CancerBACUP and NCHT meet regularly to discuss the strategic development of the service. This dynamic relationship is crucial to providing an effective user-focused service. The CancerBACUP walk-in centre is undoubtly a success story. It has been of mutual benefit to all parties. For NCHT it has provided access to high quality information and support for patients and their relatives. CancerBACUP has since developed other partnerships and opened six more walk-in centres around the UK.

1276 POSTER

Improving patient access to health care professionals: a pilot study evaluating the usefulness of e-mail communication with patients with lung cancer

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Being able to access expert information and advice promptly, in times of need and in between scheduled appointments, is an important aspect of care for patients with lung cancer (National Cancer Alliance 1996, Corner et al 2000). It is particularly important for patients with lung cancer who experience a multitude of difficult symptoms and complex psychosocial concerns, often with little help from health care professionals (Hopwood & Stevens 1995, Krishnasamy & Wilkie 1999, Hopwood & Stevens 2000)).

At a recent European School of Oncology Masterclass in Clinical Oncology in Montecatini, Italy in August 2002, the audience were challenged to consider using e-mail to communicate with patients and caregivers in an attempt to improve patient access to non-urgent information and advice.

This poster will describe an ongoing pilot project undertaken by lung cancer nurse specialists at a cancer centre in the United Kingdom to evaluate the usefulness of offering patients with lung cancer and their caregivers e-mail access to nurse specialists. This poster will describe the project in detail and discuss the findings to date. Implications for practice and futher research will also be discussed

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1277 POSTER

Chemotherapy induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) in routine practice in Spain: assessing incidence and impact on patient's daily life

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Background: Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) remains a distressing side effect of anticancer therapy for many. If not adequately controlled, CINV may interfere with a patient's ability to carry out daily activities as well as with the delivery of cancer treatments.

Objective: To assess the incidence and impact of CINV on daily life activities in patients receiving moderately to highly emetogenic, first-cycle chemotherapy (CTx), in routine practice, in Barcelona, Spain.

Methods: The incidence of CINV was evaluated from patients' self-reported diaries for the first five days following CTx. Patients reported the number of emetic episodes they experienced as well as the types and amounts of antiemetic drugs taken prior to chemotherapy. Daily nausea ratings were recorded on a 100-mm visual analogue scale (VAS) prior chemotherapy (baseline) and post chemotherapy, days 1-5 (CTx is given on day 1). VAS score differences were calculated between baseline and each