

with educational sessions and training with the relevant medical oncologists will provide them with a thorough knowledge of the diseases and therapies. They can now demonstrate real expertise in their field and they are able to make independent decisions as each representative at the MCC.

Poster Presentations

Nursing Oncology – Impact of Cancer on Patients and Families

4194

POSTER

Sometimes It's Cancer – an Educational Programme to Promote Early Presentation in Teenagers With Cancer Symptoms

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Objectives: Cancer is the most common cause of non-accidental death in teenagers and young adults (TYA), however delayed diagnosis is common in this population. TYA's are not educated within schools about classic symptoms and do not recognise important signs of teenage cancers. Previous health campaigns have been successful in influencing early help-seeking behaviour in cancer patients. The 'Christie Crew' is a TYA Service User Group who wanted to educate young people in the common signs and symptoms of teenage cancers to improve early help-seeking behaviour in young people in order to contribute to a more timely diagnosis of cancer.

Methods: The group have produced a 10 minute cancer DVD and education pack to be used in schools which has been piloted and evaluated. The DVD is age appropriate for those aged 11–18 years and highlights individual stories regarding the signs, symptoms and experiences of diagnosis. A poster campaign has also been developed by the young people to raise awareness in the wider community.

Results: The education pack has been delivered in over 280 schools in the Northwest of England. Evaluation and feedback has been analyzed and the DVD/ Education pack have been modified. Sometimes It's Cancer is an age appropriate resource which encourages young people to recognise classic symptoms. The local project was presented to the Department of Health and was approved for national roll out.

Conclusion: Raising awareness of common cancer symptoms is an urgent priority in this age group. Sometimes It's Cancer is now being implemented and is part of wider national research study to examine whether a change in young peoples knowledge and behaviour occurs following the implementation of the programme. Sometimes It's Cancer is an example of how working in partnership with young people can result in national success and influence changes in healthcare and health promotion.

4195

POSTER

The Project of Sense Making a Part of Illness: Exploring the Lived Experience of People With Cancer

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This presentation begins from the premise that being able to participate in the search to make sense of life is an important aspect of being human. Using an interpretative phenomenological approach, and guided by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and the works of Viktor Frankl, this study used semi-structured interviews to explore the lived experience of this sense making process in the lives of fifteen people who had experience of cancer. Although previous studies have explored aspects of the search for meaning in illness, this study attempts to focus closely on, and offer an in-depth exploration of, this searching activity and what it can teach us about the personal story of illness.

For the participants in this study this searching process moved beyond reflection to one that engaged the whole person. It was a search that led each person in this study to question aspects of their taken for granted world, including the realisation and challenge of not being in control of parts of their lives, and of attempting to cope with this reality. This search involved making sense of the personal experience of cancer which includes but extends beyond the bio-medical aspects of disease. The presentation will illustrate that the search to find meaning in illness, including the experience of pain and loss does not occur in isolation but is influenced by many other life issues which also may be re-visited in the light of illness. Amidst the activity of searching, many important relationships exist which may offer support but may also cause distress.

Paying attention to this sense making activity may help in directing the focus away from the idea of 'the patient' and by providing a useful account of what might be demanded if we take the idea of 'person centred care' seriously. Having explored the search for meaning in illness and having illuminated the sometimes overlooked personal story behind cancer, this presentation will offer practical insights into better understanding and responding to the personal story of illness.

4196

POSTER

Psychosocial Support of Cancer Patients Having Children at Home – the Role of Oncology Nurses

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Background: Several research findings have shown that cancer in a parent may be a significant stressor for children en adolescents. Parental cancer brings insecurity into family life. Oncology healthcare providers should be aware that parental cancer has an impact on all family members. Cancer patients having children at home may need more psychosocial support from these healthcare providers. This study examined whether oncology nurses feel capable for this task.

Material and Methods: A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews with oncology nurses was performed. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed by content analysis.

Results: Twelve female oncology nurses from different care settings participated. They experienced psychosocial support as a core part of oncology nursing care. The psychosocial support for cancer patients with children at home was primarily led by their own assumptions (e.g.: 'small children don't suffer from parental cancer' or 'it has the most impact on the family when the mother is ill') and by the degree they felt personally involved (e.g.: 'when the patient has children in the same age range as my own'). The oncology nurses offered psychosocial support only when a parent raised concrete demands or showed obvious signs of psychosocial problems. They suggested that the psychosocial support for parents with cancer could benefit from a more systematic approach. However, they lacked knowledge and appropriate skills to offer tailored support. All respondents indicated that they needed additional training concerning the psychosocial impact of parental cancer on children and adolescents, in particular concerning grief. Furthermore, they perceived a knowledge deficit with regard to family communication about cancer, information resources for these families, and referral possibilities when professional help is needed.

Conclusions: Oncology nurses perceived the psychosocial care for cancer patients having children at home as a nursing task, but seemed to provide this care in a non-systematic way. They lacked appropriate knowledge and skills to offer tailored psychosocial support for this patient group and expressed the need for additional training.

4197

POSTER

Hellenic Nurses' Patients' and Their Caregivers' Caring Behaviours in Cancer Care

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Background: Caring is a complex concept that is context and culturally defined. Previous studies in other countries compared caring behaviors perceptions between oncology nurses and patients. However caregivers perceptions have not been investigated yet. The purpose of this descriptive, exploratory study is to compare caring behaviors as perceived by nurses, patients and their caregivers in cancer care in Hellas.

Methods: Convenience sampling was used to recruit 72 nurses, 138 patients undergoing chemotherapy and their caregivers from three oncology centres in Attica area. Nurses and patients were from the same ward, while the caregivers were identified by the patients as their primary ones. Data were collected from January-August 2010 using the validated in Greek language Caring Behaviour Inventory (CBI) consisted of 24 items scored in a six point Likert scale. CBI-24 has four subscales: F1 Assurance of human presence, F2 Knowledge and skill, F3 Respectful deference to others, and F4 Positive connectedness. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS software version 17.0. Level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Subscale F2: knowledge and skill was perceived as the most important by nurses (mean = 5 ± 0.7), patients (mean 5.2 ± 0.7) and their caregivers (mean 5.2 ± 0.7). The other three subscales were rated in the same order (F1: Assurance of human presence, F3: Respectful deference to others, and F4: Positive connectedness) by all the studied groups. The three top items (Knowing how to give shots, IVs, etc., Giving the patient's treatments and medications on time, Managing equipment skillfully) were the same in the three groups. There was not statistically significant difference between patients and their caregivers scores in all subscales. Nurses scored significantly lower in subscales F2: knowledge and skill, F1: Assurance of human presence, and F4: Positive connectedness, compared to patients. Moreover caregivers scored significantly higher in all subscales than nurses.

Conclusions: Despite nurses, patients and their caregivers encouraging agreement of caring behaviours, these findings reflect a mainly technical