The Role of the Clinical Nurse Specialist and Supporting the Cancer patient

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Areas for discussion

• What is the current need for Clinical Nurse Specialists in Cancer Care?

• Role of the Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist

• Coordination of care for the Oesophagogastric cancer patient

• How and where support is offered in the patient journey

• Holistic needs assessment

• Macmillan Cancer support worker
What is the current need for Clinical Nurse Specialists in Cancer Care and what is their impact on care?

• Each year 300,000 people are diagnosed with cancer in the UK(1) Currently 2 million people living with cancer, it is estimated it will double to 4 million people by 2030, this is due to an aging and growing population and treatments are improving(2)

• It has been identified that current models of care are not identifying or meeting the needs of all patients living with cancer.

• In order for every cancer patient to be cared for promptly and holistically it is vital they are assigned a “Key worker”
What is the current need for Clinical Nurse Specialists in Cancer Care and what is their impact on care?

- Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists use their skills and expertise in cancer to provide emotional support to both the patient and their carers. They provide support at many points of the cancer journey.

- They are the patient’s Key worker/Key contact.

- Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists coordinate care services, they provide clinical advice to patients as well as practical advice ie. Financial and employment advice.

- This leads to positive patient outcomes for cancer patients.
Role of the Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist

- The Clinical Nurse Specialist is a core member of the Multi disciplinary team (MDT), according to the NICE guidelines of Improving Outcomes of Upper Gastrointestinal Cancer (2001).

- The Clinical Nurse Specialist has in depth knowledge of the physical, psychological and social effects of the site specific cancer.

- They play a key role in the delivery of the care and treatment that is required for that patient.

- The Clinical Nurse Specialist provides support to patients who often present with symptoms that can be very disabling and distressing.
Role of the Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist

- The Clinical Nurse Specialist coordinates ward admissions (planned and emergency) expedite clinic and treatment appointments, reorganise appointments or treatment dates if patients become unwell.

- This leads to reduced costs of missed appointments and treatment slots, reduces Consultant’s time

- This reduces anxiety for the patient and carer, for what is already a very stressful time in their lives.

- More patients report being treated with respect and dignity and having trust and confidence in the team caring for them.
Coordination of care for the patient with oesophago-gastric cancer

- The cancer journey for these patients is often a complex and disjointed pathway, sometimes being cared for over 2-3 hospitals.

- Involves multi-site professionals such as Surgeons, Oncologists, Clinical Nurse Specialists and Dietitians.

- The Clinical Nurse Specialist is at the centre of each patient’s care and is able to provide the relevant information and appropriate liaison between other professionals and agencies to improve the cancer experience for patients.
Coordination of care for the patient with Oesophago-gastric cancer

• Despite the complex disjointed journey the Clinical Nurse Specialist is there to provide seamless communication between hospital sites.

• Working together and good communication with other Clinical Nurse Specialists is vital.
How and where support is offered in the patient journey

- Support is provided at many points of the patient’s journey.
  - At diagnosis
  - Staging of cancer
  - Treatment decision making
  - Management of symptoms and side effects
  - Assistance with practical issues such as finances and social support
  - Provide emotional and psychological support to patient/carers
  - Being available to patient and carers via telephone/email
  - Providing support if new symptoms arise
How and where support is offered in the patient journey

• Support and information is offered in many different ways and different settings.

• Provided in many formats, information to read, links to websites as well verbal.

• Face to face in clinic, hospital ward, chemotherapy unit, radiotherapy unit, telephone and email.

• Being able to refer to other Health care professionals ie. Dietitian for nutritional support, Psychologist for more specialised intervention for anxiety, Community Palliative care nurse for support at home.

• Helping patients support themselves and their carers/relatives.
Holistic Needs Assessment

- Holistic needs assessment is a form of self assessment that asks questions about the patient other than their illness.

- Patient is seen as being at the heart of the Assessment and care planning.

- Form completed in or prior to clinic appointment.

- Focuses on concerns the patient may have that day, period of time Emotional, Spiritual, social, practical.

- Completed after initial diagnosis, at start of first treatment.

- Completed again mid treatment if required but always at end of treatment.
Holistic needs assessment

• Can be requested at any time by patient.

• After completion of assessment health care professional, often the Clinical Nurse Specialist can identify any obvious concerns at that point.

• A care plan is then devised after this assessment to find out about the patient’s individual needs.

• The health care professional will then action any of these concerns, may refer to other agencies or Health care professionals for advice and support.

• Patient is provided with a copy of the care plan and actions taken.
Macmillan Cancer Support worker

- UCLH, as a leading NHS Foundation Trust, and Macmillan Cancer Support, as the country’s leading cancer charity, have formed a strategic partnership to improve services for cancer patients.

- The building of the new University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre opened 1st April 2012.

- “the University College Hospital Macmillan Cancer Centre provides the best care, treatment, support, and information to cancer patients at every stage of their individual journey”
Macmillan Cancer Support worker

• This is the first wave of a national initiative funded by Macmillan.

• UCLH was identified as a pilot site, funding from Macmillan for 4 posts at Band 4 (Senior nursing assistant level)

• Working within Upper and Lower GI, brain, haematology and lung cancers in innovative new joint Macmillan posts.

• Working alongside a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) team to streamline patient access to care.
Macmillan Cancer Support worker

- The post-holders support the CNS in care co-ordination by providing a single point of access; they are able to co-ordinate care pathways and provide education and support for patients with non complex needs.

- Macmillan Support worker for GI has been in post since July 2012, working with Colorectal and Oesophagogastric cancer patients.

- This new post allows the Clinical Nurse Specialists more time to support complex patients and reduce admin time ie. Chasing appointments/Scans.
Macmillan Cancer Support worker

• MCSW are able to refer to Benefits advisor, make referrals to Community palliative care for symptom control and support.

• Refer for Complementary therapies and assist patient to book these appointments.

• Assist with discharge from hospital, providing follow up appointment letter straight away. Making sure patient knows who to contact if there is a problem at home.

• Assisting in clinical areas and sign posting patients in Macmillan centre ie. Information service, chemotherapy day care.
Comments from patients.....

“Your advice and help were invaluable and we are truly grateful to you”

“Just a little note to say thank you, for everything and for always doing what you said you would do”

“Thank you for all that you did in caring for mum during her stay in hospital, and all your help to enable us to take her home, even though it was for a short time”
Thank you for listening