

Accepted for Podium Presentation

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Abstract Title:

The Role of the Nurse in an Embedded Palliative Clinic

Significance and Background: Thoracic oncology patients have significant and complex pain. Nurses in the ambulatory oncology setting may be the first clinician that the patient can confide in when talking about their pain. The patients have a large pain burden and may be undertreated due to the current climate of the opioid epidemic. Due to the patients' specific needs, many have to make multiple trips to different providers to receive holistic treatment.

Purpose: To best meet the needs of the patient population, a palliative team was embedded into the operations of a high volume thoracic oncology clinic. This model allows the medical oncologists to focus on cancer treatment while palliative team addresses symptom management. Nurses connect with the patient on a personal level, creating a setting for healing.

Interventions: The thoracic oncology clinic integrated a palliative team into the clinic twice a week. This team includes a palliative physician and nurse who performs an assessment focused on pain, symptoms and medication use. Additionally, the nurse performs urine-drug toxicity screenings, counseling, alternative pain management and specialized comfort and support in times of transition to hospice.

Evaluation: A survey was administered to evaluate the knowledge base of the thoracic team pre and post integration of the palliative team into the outpatient clinic. After implementation, patient satisfaction score positively increased, pain scores decreased as well as phone calls related to pain. Oncologists endorse overall satisfaction with the support of a palliative team to manage the patient's complex symptoms. Patients voice appreciation that they are able to have their holistic needs met in one multidisciplinary visit. Nursing staff knowledge increased related to their knowledge of palliative care. Data to be shared upon selection.

Discussion: Nurses are essential in collaborating with members of the team that provide specialized care to patients. This model allows nurses to collaborate with physicians to provide better outcomes in an efficient manner.

Innovative: As a nurse working in a clinic with this new embedded clinic within a multidisciplinary system, it is my intent to show how the RN is an integral part of the team and an advocate for the oncology patient. As described, we have the data to show the effectiveness of this clinic concept for the patient and the healthcare team.