

Implementation of a Cancer Symptom and Chemotherapy Toxicity Review Clinic in the Chemotherapy Day Unit (CDU) to avoid ED presentations

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Introduction

As delivery of chemotherapy is increasingly transferred to the outpatient setting, patients and families are faced with the challenges of managing cancer symptoms and chemotherapy toxicities at home. A 6 month analysis of patients undergoing chemotherapy within our CDU revealed 40% of patients presented to ED for cancer symptom or chemotherapy toxicity management on at least one occasion. Of these patients, 36% were discharged directly from ED. Of the 64% patients admitted, 20% were discharged within 24 hours.

Objectives/Aims

Development of a Symptom and Urgent Review Clinic (SURC) in the CDU with dedicated space and personnel to manage patients who experience cancer symptoms and chemotherapy toxicities.

Description/Methodology

Consultation with stakeholders including ED, bed management, radiology, pathology and surgical units to develop clear and agreed pathways for patients presenting to the SURC>

Development of a comprehensive triage tool to guide decision making around telephone advice and management of patients presenting to the unit for care.

Development of an Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) role to triage patients by phone an/or directly presenting to the unit. Utilisation of existing medical resources within the CDU to support the ANP role

Results

7 months since its commencement there have been 912 presentations including phone calls through SURC.

Results include

9% reduction in ED presentations by patients currently undergoing chemotherapy in the CDU.

6% reduction in patients discharged directly from ED

10% decrease in patients discharged within 24 hours indicating good utilisation of SURC for less emergent needs and appropriate utilisation of ED when required.

75% patients who have presented to SURC said they would have otherwise presented to ED

98% patient satisfaction rated high/ very high.

Conclusion

Provision of a SURC model of care within the CDU can reduce ED presentations and give patients undergoing chemotherapy an improved continuity of care by cancer health providers.