

5th International

NURSING CONFERENCE

October 23-25, 2019 | Rome, Italy

Exploring Patient Perspectives about their Cancer Care Experience

Margaret I Fitch

University of Toronto, Canada

Introduction: Delivering person-centered care begins with understanding the perspectives of individuals who are the recipients of care and their experiences interacting with the cancer system. This project explored the views of individuals with cancer regarding their experiences with cancer care through a qualitative analysis of questions on the Ambulatory Oncology Patient Satisfaction Survey (AOPSS).

Methods: The project was designed as a descriptive qualitative analysis of written responses to the AOPSS survey. Files from seven jurisdictions were accessed for written comments from respondents to a final open-ended question on the AOPSS survey: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your cancer care experience? The qualitative analysis was guided by two questions: 1) what is the nature of the written comments and 2) what are the key messages or significant themes within the written comments? Key ideas were collated across all provinces to identify significant themes within the national set.

Results: The sample included comments from 6,232 individuals aged 30 and older; 42.5% were completely positive, 29.7% were completely negative, 19.8% were mixed and 7.9% were neutral. Four broad themes emerged: 1) characteristics of a 'positive' experience, 2) personal care, 3) interaction with health care providers and 4) service delivery. Respondents cited being treated as an individual with respect and dignity, clear communication, access to relevant and timely information and care delivery that takes their needs into account as important. Communication, consistency and ongoing interactions with staff were highlighted as essential elements of a positive patient experience. There is still significant variation in the delivery of person-centered care as evidenced by negatively oriented comments.

Conclusion: Our results underscore the importance of having tools in place to ensure health care organizations have timely information about their patients' concerns.

Biography

Dr. Fitch has a Bachelor of Nursing (Dalhousie University) and Masters of Science in Nursing and Doctorate (University of Toronto). Dr Fitch is Professor (Adjunct) in the Lawrence S Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing and Professor in the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. Dr. Fitch is Editor-in-Chief for the Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal. She maintains a research program in supportive cancer care. Dr. Fitch was the Founding President of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology and served as the President of the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care.

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