

Development and evaluation of a training workshop for health care professionals to improve post-treatment survivorship care

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BACKGROUND

Cancer survivors may encounter a range of physical, psychological, social, spiritual and economic effects after completing treatment. Several reports have highlighted inadequacies in the care of survivors and have called for additional education for healthcare professionals (HPs). We developed a survivorship-focused education and training program for HPs.

HYPOTHESIS: That the training program would meet the needs of HPs and would assist HPs to provide improved survivorship care.

METHODS: Workshop curriculum was based on recommendations from national and international reports. Topics included an overview of common survivorship issues, current follow up approaches, promoting wellness and self-management, the role of the general practitioner and available information and support services. Workshops were of one day's duration and held face-to-face. Teaching and learning activities included presentations, role plays and interactive group work, facilitated by a range of HPs and cancer survivors. Registration was open to nursing and allied health staff. Recruitment was by targeted emails and online promotion. A pre-workshop survey collected demographic information, assessed self-perceived knowledge and participants' learning needs. Post-workshop evaluation reflected on learning objectives and satisfaction. Two pilot workshops were held free of charge. Evaluation from the first two workshops formed the basis of the third. Participants to the 3rd workshop paid a minimal fee.

RESULTS: Through 2015, 56 participants attended the 3 workshops. Of these, 38 were from metropolitan Victoria, 11 from regional Victoria, 6 from interstate and 1 from overseas. Participants came from a wide variety of oncology workforce backgrounds. There were also a number of organizational level attendees for example program managers. There were only two male participants (1.7%). The majority of participants rated their pre-workshop survivorship knowledge as either somewhat low (32.1%, n=18) or intermediate (37.5%, n=21). Evaluation was positive. All attendees of the 3rd workshop (n=14) indicated that the program facilitated their learning needs, 85.7% (n=12) would recommend the program to others and 100% stated the workshop had inspired them and given ideas to promote and implement improved survivorship care. The program will now be further refined to ensure that it meets the learning objectives of the diverse group of participants.

346 words