The Creation of an Algorithm to Assist Survivorship Clinics Identify the Rehabilitation Needs of Cancer Survivors: An Administrative Case Report

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Background

- The side effects from cancer treatment can cause various health concerns and physical impairments.
- Approximately 40% of cancer survivors have unmet rehab needs.1

Purpose

- To create a screening algorithm to determine which survivors should receive referral to rehabilitation.

Case Description

- A regional survivorship clinic in Maine had a lack of processes in place to screen cancer survivors for rehab services.
- A survey done by the survivorship clinic showed only 40% of their survivors accessed rehab services.

Development of the Process

Screening measures for the most common symptoms experienced by cancer survivors were explored for psychometric properties and clinical utility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pain Visual Analog Scale</th>
<th>Assesses pain on an 11-point scale from 0 (no pain) to 10 (excruciating pain). Presentations of moderate (4-6) or severe pain (7-10) could necessitate referral to rehabilitation.</th>
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<td>Fatigue Numeric Scale</td>
<td>Assesses cancer-related fatigue on an 11-point scale (0-10). Presentations of moderate (4-6) to severe (7-10) fatigue could necessitate referral to rehabilitation.</td>
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<td>Short Form SF-36</td>
<td>General health-related quality of life questionnaire that assessed eight domains.2 Deficits identified within the domains could trigger rehabilitation referral.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Application of the Process

- Scott Capozza, MS, PT, a board-certified oncologic specialist in physical therapy at Smilow Cancer Hospital Survivorship Clinic, offered to provide an expert opinion.
- Feedback from Mr. Capozza as well as the faculty mentor led to removal of pain VAS and fatigue numerical scale and introduction of cut-off scores for SF-36.

Discussion & Conclusions

Screening measures for the most common symptoms experienced by cancer survivors were explored for psychometric properties and clinical utility.

Pain

- Visual Analog Scale: Assesses pain on an 11-point scale from 0 (no pain) to 10 (excruciating pain). Presentations of moderate (4-6) or severe pain (7-10) could necessitate referral to rehabilitation.

Fatigue

- Numeric Scale: Assesses cancer-related fatigue on an 11-point scale (0-10). Presentations of moderate (4-6) to severe (7-10) fatigue could necessitate referral to rehabilitation.

Short Form SF-36

- General health-related quality of life questionnaire that assessed eight domains.2 Deficits identified within the domains could trigger rehabilitation referral.

References


- The stakeholders were unavailable to discuss an evaluation of the proposed algorithm or implementation into the survivorship clinic due to the 2020 pandemic.
- Future research should be aimed towards implementation of existing algorithms, and new algorithm creation for screening onologic rehab into survivorship clinics, to determine effectiveness.