

## Training in psychosocial oncology

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### ASSURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROVIDERS

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Two symposia at the conference examined training and professional development. A first introduced innovative training opportunities in psychosocial oncology in Canada. There are currently no recognized benchmarks for national psychosocial oncology (PSO) competency. Led by Sophie Lebel and Amanda Wurz, the session examined 4 ongoing training practices across Canada, which aim to expose students to different facets of PSO and provide collaboration opportunities. A second, led by Mary Jane Esplen and Zeev Rosberger, focused on preparing clinicians to provide high-quality psychosocial cancer care. Clinicians report a lack of training and confidence regarding how best to manage the identified cancer-related distress and deliver person-centred care. The symposium discussed how to best move the field toward a more accredited and systematic approach to implement CAPO guidelines and standards in clinical practice, presenting experience with 3 educational programs geared toward improving the provision of psychosocial care and integrating psycho-oncology into routine or specialized care.

#### **SUMMARY: Research seminars at Princess Margaret**

Gerald Devins. Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Research Development Seminar. Presented at CAPO 2018. Abstract S149.1

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Research trainees in psychosocial oncology often work in off-campus settings. They receive support from mentors and senior clinician-scientists, but lack a substantial cohort at the same stage of academic development with whom to bond and learn to participate effectively in academic exchange. They rarely participate fully in seminars or other academic events. The Research Development Seminar at Princess Margaret was designed to provide a supportive setting for trainees and junior scientists to develop fundamental skills in presenting their research, and in discussing and debating academic issues. During the seminar, each 15-minute presentation is followed by two 5-minute discussant commentaries, and concludes with 30 minutes of general discussion. Membership is limited to graduate students and junior scientists and requires: (a) presenting one's work in-progress

on a rotating basis; (b) participating as a discussant on a rotating basis; and (c) regular attendance. Voluntary attendance and participation in all roles attest to the effectiveness of the seminar as a skills-building opportunity.

### **SUMMARY: Clinical training in Alberta**

Robinson J. Clinical training in Psychosocial Oncology at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre & Cumming School of Medicine. Presented at CAPO 2018. Abstract S149.2.

The Tom Baker Cancer Centre and Cumming School of Medicine (CSM), located in Calgary, Alberta, is one of a handful of centers in the world to offer multidisciplinary specialized clinical training in psychosocial oncology (PSO). It offers a predoctoral clinical psychology residency, accredited since 1991 by the Canadian Psychology Association. Clinical fellowships in PSO are offered through the CSM in subspecialized domains of PSO: sexuality, palliative and end-of-life care, and bone and blood marrow transplantation. Observerships and visiting professorships are offered to international trainees from disciplines such as psychology, psychiatry and nursing. In the past few years, trainees came from China, Chile, Australia, Slovenia, Dubai and Thailand. Practicum placements are available for students/residents in social work, psychology, psychiatry and family practice. It is one of the first centres in the world to offer a university-accredited graduate-level course in psychosocial oncology to students from medicine, social work, psychology, nursing and kinesiology. Department members have developed and taught graduate-level university-accredited and continuing education courses as part of CAPO's Inter-professional PSO Distance Education Project. Programs model multidisciplinary collaborative efforts that have been sustainable and recognized by professional bodies across Canada.

### **SUMMARY: Distance education**

Esplen MJ, Wong J, McLeod D. Educating health care professionals in Psychosocial Oncology through distance education. Presented at CAPO 2018, Abstract S149.3.

The Interprofessional Psychosocial Oncology Distance Education (IPODE) series offers foundational courses as well as specialized courses on sexual health to graduate students and direct care clinicians. The 13-week curriculum combines independent learning activities with real-time, online weekly seminars. More than 250 academic students and 500 clinicians participated in IPODEs between 2008 and 2015. Since the transition to de Souza Institute's online learning platform in Fall 2015, an additional 100 health professionals, including include nurses, social workers, psychologists and physicians, have completed IPODE courses. Pre- and post-course evaluations demonstrate significant knowledge improvement in theories and clinical practices in psychosocial oncology, and in interprofessional collaboration for person-centred practice.

### **SUMMARY: Guidelines to increase clinician confidence in symptom management**

McLeod D, Esplen MJ, Hack T, et al. Integrating clinical practice guidelines in cancer care: the therapeutic practices for distress management (TPDM) Project. Presented at CAPO 2018. Abstract S156.2.

Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) have been published on the management of fatigue, pain, depression and anxiety. However, despite the guidelines, the implementation of distress screening and management programs is not standardized across regions and cancer populations. The Therapeutic Practices for Distress Management (TPDM) Project was carried out to support clinicians in integrating recommendations from 4 CPGs in routine care at 5 cancer care sites in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba.

Using a concurrent, mixed-method study design and knowledge translation (KT) activities, this project included 2 phases: Phase I, a baseline/preparation phase, and Phase II, an intervention phase plus evaluation. At baseline, the Theoretical Domains Framework was used to identify barriers and enablers to practice. The intervention phase included a one-year education/supervision program (56 hours) and KT strategies to address barriers identified at baseline. Primary outcomes were knowledge and self-efficacy in practicing CPGs, as measured by a Knowledge/Self-Efficacy Survey. A secondary outcome was observer-rated performance with standardized patients. Participants included 80 (90%) nurses and 9 (10%) social workers.

The TPDM program was effective in improving knowledge, self-efficacy and performance. All measures demonstrated significant change pre and post module, with evidence of increasing knowledge ( $p < 0.01$ ) and confidence ( $p < 0.01$ ) over time. Further, there was evidence of a shift in barriers identified in Phase I and enablers to practicing in alignment with the CPGs. Our finding indicated that a tailored education program using case-based learning and supervision over time improves knowledge and practice among frontline clinicians.

### **SUMMARY: Online education**

Wong J, Esplen MJ, Blacker S, et al. Improving quality of palliative care in oncology through standardized online education. Presented at CAPO 2018. Abstract S156.3.

To meet demand for high-quality palliative care, healthcare providers require educational support to recognize when palliative care services are appropriate, and to have the confidence in delivering them. The Education in Palliative and End-of-Life Care (EPEC) curriculum is internationally recognized and originally developed by a team at Northwestern University in partnership with the National Cancer Institute in US. It was adapted for the Canadian landscape, updated and transitioned to an online learning platform for improved access. The online curriculum (iEPEC-Oncology) includes 16 online modules and covers core competencies

## IN BRIEF

### Already known

- Training in psychosocial oncology is inconsistent and insufficient across Canada.

### What these studies showed

- New educational programs are working to build skills in psychosocial care and integrate them into clinical practice.

### Next steps

- Continue to innovate and spread training opportunities.

in palliative care, from comprehensive symptom management, to culturally sensitive approaches in communication and working with patients and families. The curriculum uses interactive activities, case studies and demonstration videos to spotlight best practices in psychosocial aspects of end-of-life care. It incorporates an interprofessional team-based approach throughout the modules.

A total of 70 clinicians participated in the course in 2017. Pre- and post-data were collected, including self-report on knowledge and confidence, quizzes and exit exams. Participants showed significant improvement in all competency areas covered by the course. They commented on the high quality of the content, and appreciated demonstration videos and learner-controlled experience, as well as easy access to clinical and decision support tools. The role of online learning in the standardization of psychosocial training and the importance of combining online learning with local contextualization were discussed. 