Palliative Care in Young Adults with Cancer
Addressing Needs for an Overlooked Population

Brittany Linton M.A.¹, Evelyn Marquez¹, Megan Pfitzinger Lippe MSN, RN¹, Abigail Seow¹, Christopher Spruell²

The University of Texas at Austin¹ and The University of Texas Medical Branch²
Transformative Teams in Healthcare
Advanced Inter-professional Seminar on Communication and Collaboration

- Advanced level students in medicine, social work, pharmacy, educational psychology, and nursing learn about and actively practice interprofessional, team-based health care through experiential and didactic lessons.

- Capstone Project
  - Student teams design and implement a project that addresses a healthcare issue, employs an interprofessional team approach, utilizes the expertise of team members, and engages members of the healthcare community.
Multidisciplinary Student Team

- Unique perspectives brought by different professions
- Learning environment facilitated open dialogue between students
- Team building exercises fostered teamwork
Why Young Adults With Cancer in Palliative Care?

- Gap in the research for this target population
- Misunderstandings of palliative care
- Unique psychosocial and medical problems
- Scarcity of integrated teams to address the holistic needs
Our Steps

- Defined our research question
- Defined our population and target healthcare need
- Gathered information from local community partners and literature
- Developed general suggested guidelines for integrated care around unique population needs
- Mapped out specialized role responsibilities for each health team member
- Discussed how to move forward
Guiding the Discussion

Population:
- Young adults defined between 18-35 years old
- Oncology patients receiving palliative care

Research Questions:
1. What are the greatest needs of the population as defined by the extant literature and by professionals in the field? Similarly, what needs go unaddressed?
2. Utilizing the assessed needs, what recommendations can be generated for interdisciplinary team role responsibilities to improve provision of holistic care?
Defining Palliative Care

“Palliative care means patient and family-centered care that optimizes quality of life by anticipating, preventing, and treating suffering. Palliative care throughout the continuum of illness involves addressing physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs and to facilitate patient autonomy, access to information, and choice”

(National Consensus Project, 2013, p. 9)
Additional Themes

- Family and patient psychosocial issues
- Age-appropriate resources
- Advocacy

Major Young Adult Needs

- Adjusting to “new normal”
- Empowerment in decision-making
- Fertility/health-related planning

Review of Literature

- Scope not clearly defined
- General practices do not address unique needs
- Sparse research
- Training needed for inter-professional teams

Community Partner Interviews

- Financial restrictions limit expansions
- Focus on goals and daily life
- Address end-of-life care decisions
Six Domains of Young Adult Palliative Care Needs

- Health Literacy, Empowerment, & Decision Making in Team Approach
- Symptom Management
- Fertility/Sexuality
- Peer & Social Isolation
- Mortality, Death, & Dying
- End-of-life & Advanced Directive Decision Making
Shared Responsibilities and Unique Contributions

- Responsibilities identified from professional experience and literature
- Common responsibilities extracted
- Remaining responsibilities unique by profession
- Fostered understanding of roles of interprofessional team members
Areas for Future Exploration

- Further research on unique barriers to care for young adults with cancer in palliative care
- Engage with community partners to identify integrated roles in existence
- Journal publication of identified needs and roles
Thank You

For additional questions or request for further information — including references — please email:

brittanylinton@utexas.edu

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References


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