

Cancer Treatment Information for the Primary Health Care setting.

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INTRODUCTION:

The delivery of best practice care to cancer patients requires a sound understanding of the contemporary literature, key evidence and internationally accepted standards. It also involves the administration of cytotoxic drugs and managing the associated side effects 24 hours per day. The primary health care setting is often the place a patient will come for advice and support during and following their cancer treatment cycle.

DISCUSSION

Cancer Australia has funded a project to provide cancer treatment information to general practitioners, practice nurses, and community nurses. The focus for the primary health care setting is side effect information and symptom management, presented in such a way to support the primary health care work flow. This information will be disseminated via the Cancer Institute NSW Standard Cancer Treatment Program (CI-SCaT).

CI-SCaT is a unique and innovative Australian based resource that provides access to nearly 1,000 peer reviewed online cancer treatment and supportive care protocols. The resource blends evidence with practical realities and is available all day every day at no cost to the user. All information is dynamic, evidence based, safe, and consensus-approved by expert metropolitan, regional, and rural clinicians.

Primary Health Care content will include, but is not limited to, communication templates, patient information sheets, treatment and symptom management information, and clinical tools. Given the increasing incidence of some cancers and the greater reliance of primary health care in the follow up for these patients, having access to this information will provide the practice nurse with a current and accurate knowledge base for managing these patients.

CONCLUSION

Having been active for three years, CI-SCaT is increasingly being accepted as a reliable source of cancer treatment and supportive care information. CI-SCaT can provide expert guidance and assistance to those clinicians who are required to manage cancer patients when specialist expertise is least accessible.