



UICC, Geneva – 27-31 August 2008

Mrs Jen Bichel-Findlay Ms Shelley Rushton Ms Sue Sinclair and Professor Robyn Ward

Title: Online Access to Standardised Cancer Treatments: An effective vehicle to promote standardisation, reduce variation, inform patients, and empower clinicians

Background: In order to deliver optimal treatment to cancer patients, clinicians need to have a comprehensive understanding of contemporary literature, key evidence, administration principles, and internationally acceptable standards. Accessing this information at the point-of-care is often challenging, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Objectives: In 2005 the Cancer Institute NSW, under Program 13 of the NSW Cancer Plan 2004-2006¹ activated a web-based application that provides comprehensive information about cancer treatment protocols, including indications, key evidence, dose modifications, comparative efficacy and toxicity, step-by-step administration principles, potential side effects, relevant clinical guidelines, patient information sheets, and much more. Designed by a medical oncologist, the Cancer Institute NSW Standard Cancer Treatments (CI-SCaT) is available 24 hours a day via the Internet, at no cost, and without access restrictions. Its successful clinical governance has resulted in strong clinician buy-in within Australia, and an unexpected popularity (over 400,000 hits and 20,000 user sessions monthly). Under the NSW Cancer Plan 2007-2010², a strategic review was undertaken in 2007 to ensure that future planning of this resource meets users' expectations.

Methods: A triangulated method was used to collect data in 2007, incorporating an online survey of 222 respondents, three focus groups of 64 clinicians, and one-on-one interviews with 30 selected stakeholders. This multi-method evaluation was also supported by web log statistics, revealing over 400,000 hits and 20,000 user sessions each month.

Results: The results indicate that despite CI-SCaT being a nascent resource, it is viewed as a credible resource by clinicians, is widely supported by users, has empowered selected groups of health professionals, and has an established position within Australian cancer services facilities. Users have a clear view as to the role of CI-SCaT, and they particularly value the peer reviewed information supported by scientific evidence accessible at the point-of-care.

Conclusions: With over 700 protocols currently available on the website, and rising each year, CI-SCaT usage is predicted to continue to increase over time. Having access to this information ensures that clinicians are confidently and competently delivering cancer treatments to patients, with the knowledge that the information is accurate, contemporary, evidence based, evidence adaptive, and clinician endorsed. Having access to this information also ensures that patients are afforded an opportunity to take an active part in decisions about their health care relating to treatment, prevention, and management of symptoms and side effects.

References:

¹ NSW Cancer Plan 2004-2006 Cancer Institute NSW – 2004.

² NSW Cancer Plan 2007-2010 Cancer Institute NSW – 2006.