

2016 ONS POSTER SESSION

Abstract

Educating metastatic breast cancer patients through visual communication aids: The Dandelion Project

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Metastatic breast cancer (MBC) is different from earlier stage breast cancer—it cannot be cured and its trajectory is complicated. MBC patients have, on average, 3 years' life expectancy and are on lifelong treatment. Patients have few days to choose treatment after an unexpected diagnosis. Sadly, most of these conversations with HCPs are oral, a communication method with low retention accuracy of 14% in non life-threatening situations (Houts, et al, 2001).

Objective: Use an everyday metaphor in a visual communication aid (“the toolkit”) to help nurses and other HCPs better communicate with newly diagnosed MBC patients, with a range of literacy levels, about their diagnosis, treatment options, quality of life and related considerations.

Methods: A patient and HCP centered approach was used following the “U.S.E.R. Design Thinking Framework” (Beaumont, 2011); >80 patients and HCPs helped develop and test a visual communication toolkit prototype; the researcher experienced and mapped communication pathways in 6 scenarios; 53 patients informed design iterations of the toolkit; a survey (n=500) measured baseline patient communication experiences prior to starting MBC treatments to identify gaps.

Results: One-third of patients surveyed felt they didn't have enough knowledge to participate in decision making. Patients tend to overestimate their knowledge, with just 46% including both HER2 and hormone status when asked to describe their type. Only 13% of patients surveyed (n=487) had visuals during initial discussions with their HCPs. A dandelion metaphor was visualized to explain metastasis and treatment options as the basis of the toolkit. The prototype comprises 4 sheets for oncologists to convey pathology and treatment options, and a set of customized cards for use by nurses. Patient and HCP feedback during prototype development showed high levels of engagement with the metaphor.

Conclusion: A visual approach to improving communication between patients and HCPs is possible based on positive results of patient observations and practitioner feedback on the prototype. The toolkit (piloted in the U.S. and internationally in 2016), is expected to address issues of low-literacy, fear and taboo surrounding discussion of MBC and improve understanding of the disease and its treatments.

WHAT: Oncology Nursing Society: ONS 41st Annual Congress – *Big Change Starts Here*

WHEN: April 28-May 1, 2016

WHERE: Henry Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX April

Poster Presentation – Fri, April 29 7-8am

ONS Exhibit Booth Number #409

SHOW HOURS:

Thurs, April 28 11am-4:15pm

Fri, April 29, 11am-4:15pm

Sat, April 30 11am-2:45pm

Dandeliontoolkit.com