

Poster 57: Teaching chemotherapy through comics for patients

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Topic
Quality & Healthcare Systems

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to investigate the potential teaching and therapeutic benefits of using comics to introduce gynecologic oncology patients to chemotherapy.

Methods

This multistage mixed methods project is situated within a larger study on the feasibility of using graphic medicine in an oncology setting. The first comic addressed coping with cancer. Survey results indicated that patients desired a comic on chemotherapy. To determine specific content, focus groups were conducted with a gynecologic oncology support group including patient, physician, nursing, and care coordinator representatives. Appropriate adjustments were made based on feedback; the comic was translated into Spanish and Vietnamese to accommodate the language needs of the New Orleans gynecologic oncology population. The pamphlet and an accompanying survey were implemented into four gynecologic oncology clinics in the greater New Orleans area. The survey included questions on demographics, gained knowledge, and relatability/likability/helpfulness. Descriptive statistics were used. Enrollment in the study is currently ongoing.

Results

22 surveys were collected. All participants were English-speaking. Average age was 65.8 years. 50.0% identified as white, 45.5% as Black, and 9.1% as Latino or Hispanic. 50.0% had endometrial cancer, and 50.0% had ovarian/fallopian tube cancer. 77.3% had been diagnosed with Stage III or IV cancer. Half were currently receiving chemotherapy; half had already completed chemotherapy. After reading the comic, 90.0% agreed or strongly agreed that the comic was helpful for preparing for chemotherapy, 95.0% were more aware of potential side effects, 95.0% were more comfortable with strategies for dealing with chemotherapy, and 95.0% learned something useful. Additionally, 90.0% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to relate to the main character, 85.0% felt less alone, 80.0% had a new sense of direction and empowerment, and 65.0% felt less anxious. 100% enjoyed the comic and found it comforting that the comic was based on real survivors.

Conclusions

This study showed that comics can successfully address complex and emotionally difficult topics such as chemotherapy. The comic had a positive educational and emotional impact on gynecologic oncology patients.