

Outcome Measurement

Patient satisfaction scores and contact with oncology nurse navigators

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BACKGROUND: Satisfaction with care is a reported outcome of patient navigation. Assessment methods vary, as do navigation programs, including the use of oncology nurse navigators (ONNs).

OBJECTIVES: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effect of contact with an ONN on patient satisfaction.

METHODS: A retrospective review of oncology Press Ganey outpatient satisfaction surveys was conducted. Groups with and without ONN contact were compared on responses to survey items relevant to ONN roles. For those 15 items, mean scores, top box scores, and all-facility percentile rank were compared between those who did and did not report contact with an ONN.

FINDINGS: For all items, mean scores and percentile rank comparisons were higher for the group with ONN contact. In the group with ONN contact, top box scores were significantly higher for items pertaining to nurses' concern for patients' questions and worries and staff sensitivity to difficulties and inconvenience caused by the condition or treatment.

KEYWORDS

outcome measures; patient satisfaction; oncology nurse navigators

DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER

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THE TRAJECTORY OF CANCER DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT IS COMPLEX, occurring in a fragmented healthcare system in which multiple practitioners in various healthcare settings play a role. Maintaining a focus on a patient's personal needs and values while providing attention to timeliness and quality of care is challenging (Institute of Medicine, 2013). One response has been the development of navigation programs.

Navigation programs began in the 1990s to increase cancer survival by addressing barriers to care, particularly for the poor and uninsured (Freeman, 2004, 2015). In the intervening decades, oncology navigation programs have expanded in population focus and setting (Fiscella et al., 2011; Oncology Nursing Society, 2013; Paskett, Harrop, & Wells, 2011), and the provision of patient navigation is currently incorporated into cancer accreditation standards (American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, 2016; National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, 2018). Oncology navigation programs affect the screening, diagnostic, treatment, and survivorship trajectory. At their most basic level, navigation programs share a focus on patient support provided by navigators who work to eliminate barriers to care and access to resources (Campbell, Craig, Eggert, & Bailey-Dorton, 2010; Freund, 2017). Navigators have included laypersons, case managers, social workers, and nurses (Freund, 2017; Wilcox & Bruce, 2010). Growing interest in oncology nurses as navigators resulted in a role delineation study (Brown et al., 2012) followed by the publication of oncology nurse navigator (ONN) core competencies (Oncology Nursing Society, 2013, 2017). Despite the long history of navigation, research on outcomes related to nurse navigation is limited and more research is needed (Case, 2011; Crane-Okada, 2013).

Satisfaction with care is a frequent metric reported for navigation programs (Freund et al., 2008; Wells, Campbell, Kumar, Clark, & Jean-Pierre, 2018). Patient satisfaction, a patient-reported assessment, has been described as a clinically important and meaningful measure (Fiscella et al., 2011). It is also a measure that is closely associated with patient perception of care and influenced by direct interaction with clinicians (Lis, Rodeghier, & Gupta, 2009). Methods and instruments for measuring the effect of nurse navigators on patient satisfaction have varied. In addition, some reports have included a mix of navigation programs and programs that employ lay and