

Assessing the effectiveness of an online education resource for post-prostatectomy prostate cancer patients and their caregivers: Our experience with the evaluation of online patient education

Merrylee McGuffin¹, Katja Bonin², Deb Feldman-Stewart³, Ewa Szumacher²

¹Department of Radiation Therapy, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

²Department of Radiation Oncology, University of Toronto

³Dept of Oncology and Division of Cancer Care and Epidemiology, Cancer Research Institute, Queen's University



Background

- Radiotherapy (RT) after prostatectomy is indicated to prevent local recurrence while improving biochemical control and disease-free survival
- Most prostate cancer patients do not receive adequate information about post-prostatectomy radiotherapy to make informed treatment decisions
- Based on two previous studies, we developed an online education resource to better inform patients about post-operative RT and help them with their treatment decisions
- Evaluation and assessment is necessary to determine whether the education resource is beneficial to the target population
- An online evaluation process was chosen for its convenience and accessibility to participants



Purpose

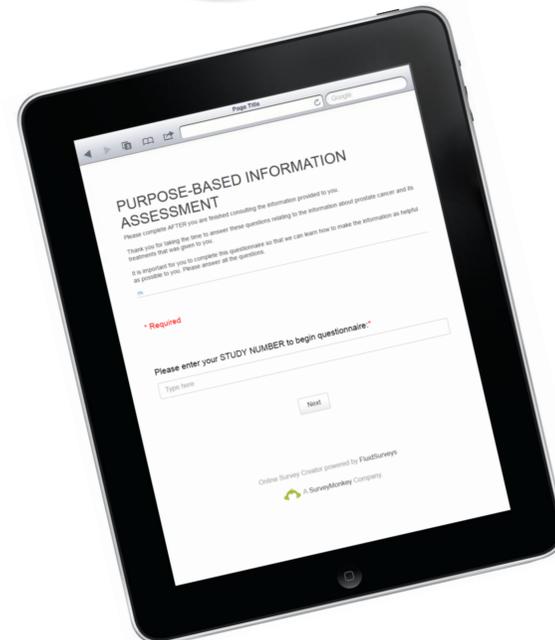
- Implement an online evaluation process to assess the impact and effectiveness of an online education resource for patients and their caregivers currently involved in decision making around post-prostatectomy RT



Process

- All post-prostatectomy patients and their caregivers attending a consultation with a radiation oncologist regarding radiotherapy treatment at the Odette Cancer Centre are eligible to participate
- All consenting participants are given a unique study identification number and written instructions on how to access the online education resource at a time and place that is convenient for them
- After taking as much time as needed to review the information, participants are directed to an online demographics form and purpose-based information assessment (PIA) questionnaire
- PIA is a validated tool used to rate patient education on a 4-point Likert scale according to six identified common purposes for such information:

- 1) organizing
- 2) understanding
- 3) decision making
- 4) planning
- 5) providing emotional support to others
- 6) discussing the situation with others



Benefits/Challenges

➤ Benefits:

- ✓ Potential for participants to access study materials at home online
- ✓ Reduction in clinic time taken for completion of study materials (with exception of consent)
- ✓ Reduction of material resources used for purposes of study
- ✓ Elimination of data entry and streamlined data analysis

➤ Challenges:

- ✗ Development of an online evaluation for patients in the setting of an REB approved study is complex due to privacy issues, procedural requirements and other ethical considerations (e.g. security of external host server for long term storage)
- ✗ Technical issues beyond the control of the investigators (e.g. study materials inaccessible to participants due to use of old or outdated operating systems)
- ✗ Participants have varying levels of access, proficiency with online materials
- ✗ Comparatively slow response rate

Impact on Patient Care

- An online education resource has the potential to reach a large number of patients and their caregivers who desire more information, involvement in treatment decisions
- Online evaluation of such resources may be perceived as convenient to both investigators and participants
- However, technical and procedural challenges may outweigh the perceived benefits

Future Directions

- Our online education resource has the potential to empower patients to become more active, feel less anxious and be better prepared for post-operative radiotherapy
- Online evaluation is currently on going with 11 participants accrued
- Future participants will be given the choice of online or paper based evaluations

Acknowledgements:

