

BACKGROUND

- Primary care involvement in breast cancer survivorship and post-treatment follow-up care is increasing
- Primary care physicians and nurse practitioners may not be knowledgeable or confident providing survivorship care
- This study builds on previous research that identified key guideline recommendations for breast cancer survivorship care¹ and knowledge and practice gaps²
- The **purpose** of this study is to identify challenges, strengths and opportunities related to provision of evidence-based breast cancer survivorship care by primary care physicians (MDs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) in the South East Local Health Integration Network (SE-LHIN) of Ontario

METHODS

- **Research design** was a qualitative descriptive study
- **Data collection** consisted of semi-structured interviews with 9 nurse practitioners and 10 family physicians from the South East LHIN to explore their perceptions of the challenges and identify strengths and opportunities related to implementation of these guidelines
- **Data analysis** of interview transcripts consisted of qualitative thematic analysis
- **Study rigour** and trustworthiness were upheld through audit trail reviews, data source and researcher triangulation, and member checking to validate interpretation of thematic findings

RESULTS

Perceived Challenges

Themes	Subthemes	Recommended Knowledge Translation Strategies
Inconsistent educational preparation	No formal education On the job learning Overwhelming to keep up to date Diversity of learning needs and preferences	-include survivorship education in undergraduate and postgraduate educational programs -provide continuing education to current primary care providers
Provider anxieties	Fear of patients falling through the cracks Fear of missing diagnosis Fear of legal consequences Comfort zone Feeling like a beginner	-provide support to primary care providers as they assume responsibility for survivorship care -evaluate the transition to primary care follow-up from the perspective of primary care providers
Primary care burden	Shifting burden to primary care Not my responsibility Bring more to a visit Primary care workload Admin support workload Infrastructure & funding Access inequities	-develop EMR templates and processes to facilitate tracking breast cancer survivors and implement recommended guidelines -provide primary care providers and breast cancer survivors with clear information about what resources, specialists are available to support provision of survivorship care, as well as how to access them

Perceived Strengths and Opportunities

Themes	Subthemes	Recommended Knowledge Translation Strategies
Tools and technology	Tracking survivors Electronic health records Communication tools Protocols and survivorship care plans	-develop EMR templates and processes to facilitate tracking breast cancer survivors and implement recommended guidelines -develop tools, protocols and care plans to embed guidelines into routine practices
Empowering survivors	Patient responsibility Survivor expectations for follow-up Positive attitudes & behaviours Providing survivorship care plans	-educate survivors about primary care role in survivorship care -educate survivors about survivorship guidelines and provide them with a copy of the survivorship care plan -develop self-management support programs for survivors -educate primary care providers about providing self-management support
Optimizing nursing roles	NP role frustration and scope of practice Nurse navigator role Nursing chronic disease management role NP role benefits	-provide education to NPs, RNs and RPNs to support their practicing to full scope of practice in providing comprehensive breast cancer survivorship care -expand existing RN roles to support provision of comprehensive survivorship care in primary care

CONCLUSIONS

- We identified several important challenges to implementation of comprehensive evidence-based survivorship care for breast cancer survivors, as well as several strengths and opportunities that could be built upon to address barriers
- Harnessing existing technology, involving survivors in self-management of survivorship care, and optimizing existing nursing roles are promising strategies to address the known gaps to comprehensive breast cancer survivorship care
- Findings from this research will inform targeted knowledge translation interventions to provide support and education for primary care providers and breast cancer survivors

REFERENCES

- (1) Luctkar-Flude, M., Aiken, A., McColl, M.A., & Tranmer, J. (2015). A comprehensive framework and key guideline recommendations for the provision of evidence-based breast cancer survivorship care within the primary care setting. *Family Practice*. 32(2), 129-140.
- (2) Luctkar-Flude, M., Aiken, A., McColl, M.A., Tranmer, J. & Langley, H. (2015). Are primary care providers implementing evidence-based care for breast cancer survivors? *Canadian Family Physician*, 61, 978-984.