

'PALLIATIVE CARE VIRTUAL': A SPECIALISED OUTPATIENT CLINIC ENABLING EARLY AND IMPROVED SUPPORTIVE AND PALLIATIVE CARE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Amanda Vo¹, Antonio Claridad¹, Jade Hudson¹, Catriona Parker^{1,2}, Peter Poon^{1,2}

¹Supportive and Palliative Care Unit, Monash Health, Melbourne, Vic, AUSTRALIA, ²School of Clinical Sciences, Monash University, Melbourne, Vic, AUSTRALIA

Background

Palliative Care Virtual (PCV) is a telehealth model of palliative care for oncology outpatients, synchronously operated with medical oncology outpatient clinics to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and early referral to palliative care. PCV was implemented in October 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic at Monash Health in Melbourne, Australia.

Objective

To describe our cohort and the acceptability of our PCV model of care

Method

We prospectively captured data and surveyed patients, their caregivers and healthcare professionals to understand the acceptability of the telehealth model

Results – our cohort

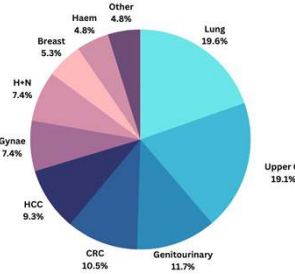
Between October 2020 and September 2022, there were 423 patients cared for by PCV



66 years old (median)
43% female
41% non-English speaking background
66% were born outside of Australia

Most (93%) of patients had an Australia-modified Karnofsky Performance Status above 50

Tumour stream: Lung, upper gastrointestinal and genitourinary cancers comprised 50% of the cohort



Modality: From 1384 consultations, 816 (63%) were via video, while 516 (37%) were via phone

Median **11 days from referral to initial consult** and median of **101 days from referral to death** (prior was a median of 30 days) indicating good engagement and much earlier referral



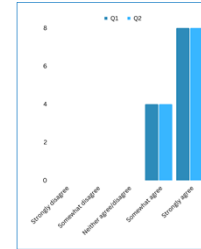
Results – acceptability

37 patients, 5 caregivers and 15 health professionals responded

For clinicians

Q1 I feel this model of care worked well for my patients (n=12)

Q2 I would recommend PCV to other clinicians and patients (n=12)



For patients and caregivers 19 of 23 respondents found telehealth as good as or better than a traditional face-to-face appointment

Free-text data told us the PCV:

- Had a positive effect on communication
- Improved care logistics
- Is responsive to patient needs



Conclusion

PCV is successfully utilising a telehealth model of care with high levels of acceptability for patients, carers and health professionals and will continue beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.