

EVALUATION OF A CANCER SURVIVORSHIP CLINICAL PLACEMENT PROGRAM FOR ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND GENERAL PRACTICE NURSES

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BACKGROUND

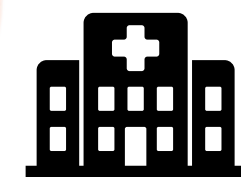
Allied health professionals (AHP) and general practice nurses (GPN) have essential roles supporting the health and wellbeing of cancer survivors in the post-treatment survivorship phase. Access to cancer survivorship education and clinical practice can be challenging for AHP and GPN.

AIM

Building on past initiatives^{1,2}, this program sought to implement a state-wide clinical placement program to improve the knowledge and confidence of AHP and GPN to deliver quality cancer survivorship care.

METHODS

Recruitment targets:



Up to 12 acute, rehabilitation and community health services across Victoria, Australia, were engaged to offer short survivorship-focused observational placements.



Minimum of 160 AHP and 40 GPN, with 40% from rural or regional locations.

Program promotion was primarily via emails to stakeholder groups, social media, and newsletters.

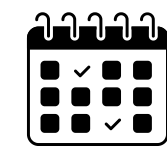
Program components:



online cancer survivorship education
3-5 hours



survivorship-focused observational placement 3-8 hours



access to cancer survivorship education events post-placement

Program evaluation: A mixed methods approach was used including pre- and post-placement surveys.

Short observational placements can improve cancer survivorship knowledge and confidence among allied health professionals and general practice nurses.



“

“... I use the knowledge I have gained in my career daily and I have received such lovely feedback from cancer survivors and their family on feeling heard, understood [and] that they know that as a Nurse, I am here for them in each step of their journey.” *General practice nurse*

RESULTS

Between November 2022 and April 2024, 10 Victorian health services offered placements across 32 clinics.

206 health professionals (AHP=166, GPN=40), 45% (n=93/206) from rural or regional areas, completed the program.

13 AHP disciplines participated with greatest representation from physiotherapists (n=37, 18%), dietitians (n=25, 12%), occupational therapists (n=19, 9%), exercise physiologists (n=18, 9%) and allied health assistants (n=16, 8%).

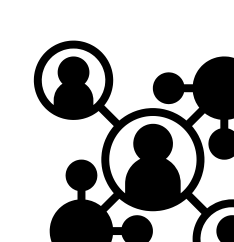
Participant survey responses (82% N=168) indicated that:



99% met their self-reported **learning objectives**



91% found the **knowledge gained to be relevant**



96% would **recommend** this program to others

95% improved **awareness** on where to access survivorship education, information and resources

90% increased **confidence**

82% improved understanding on **referral pathways**

80% were able to **build clinical and referral relationships** with other health professionals

REFERENCES

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2. Piper, A., Leon, L., Kelly, H., Bailey, A., Wiley, G., Lisy, K., Simkiss, L., & Jefford, M. (2020). Clinical placement program in cancer survivorship for primary care providers 2017–2019. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, 14, 14–18.

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