Who Would Benefit from a Peer Navigator vs. Who Wants to be a Peer Navigator? A Survey of Canadian Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer

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INTRODUCTION

- Patient navigation has been shown to overcome barriers to care.[1]
- Many adolescents and young adults (AYAs) would prefer to receive navigation from a peer cancer survivor through a digital app.[2]
- Determining which AYAs would benefit from navigation and who is best suited to provide navigation could optimize service delivery.

METHODS

- A survey was administered to Canadian AYAs diagnosed with cancer between the ages of 15-39 at a cancer centre and online through social media.
- Participants were asked for their peer navigation needs and preferences, psychosocial wellbeing, clinical and sociodemographic characteristics.
- Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and chi-square tests were calculated.

RESULTS

- Participants (n=436) were on average 31.2 years of age (SD 6.3), 3.3 years post-diagnosis (SD 3.8), 65% identified as women and 63% identified as White.

RESULTS

- Participants who desired support from a peer navigator: more likely to be younger and female; they also reported higher anxiety, depression and loneliness scores, lower social support and coping behaviours, and poorer overall health, than those who did not (Tables 1 and 2).

- Participants interested in becoming a peer navigator: more likely to be female, to have completed treatment and to have higher anxiety and loneliness scores than those who did not (Tables 3 and 4). However, they reported lower anxiety and loneliness than AYAs who desired support from a peer navigator.

Table 1. Connecting with a peer navigator (chi-square test results)

Variable	No (%)	Yes (%)	χ^2 (p-value)
Sex	167	164	20.135 (<.001)
Male	78 (46.7)	38 (23.2)	
Female	89 (53.3)	126 (76.8)	
Location	168	164	7.160 (.007)
Urban	154 (91.7)	134 (81.7)	
Rural	14 (8.3)	30 (18.3)	
Health	180	180	
Poor	5 (2.8)	6 (3.3)	
Fair	28 (15.6)	51 (28.3)	14.056 (.007)
Good	66 (36.7)	72 (40.0)	
Very good	57 (31.7)	34 (18.9)	
Excellent	24 (13.3)	17 (9.4)	

Table 2. Connecting with a peer navigator (t-test results)

Variable	No			Yes			t-test (p-value)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
Age	191	30.24	6.50	184	31.79	5.73	-2.44 (.015)
Life satisfaction	175	7.07	2.02	178	6.45	1.91	2.96 (.003)
GAD-7	177	4.79	4.88	177	6.88	5.02	-3.98 (<.001)
PHQ-9	175	4.84	4.96	175	7.99	5.94	-5.38 (<.001)
UCLA	169	11.28	13.25	170	20.41	14.95	-5.95 (<.001)
SPS	169	35.99	4.47	176	34.03	5.23	3.73 (<.001)

Table 3. Becoming a peer navigator (chi-square test results)

Variable	No (%)	Yes (%)	χ^2 (p-value)
Sex	121	204	34.865 (<.001)
Male	67 (55.4)	47 (23.0)	
Female	54 (44.6)	157 (77.0)	
In treatment	136	228	4.226 (.040)
No	71 (52.2)	144 (63.2)	
Yes	65 (47.8)	84 (36.8)	

Table 4. Becoming a peer navigator (t-test results)

Variable	No			Yes			t-test (p-value)
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	
GAD-7	129	5.12	5.01	218	6.29	5.07	-2.090 (.037)
UCLA	119	12.08	13.71	215	18.14	15.08	-3.628 (<.001)

DISCUSSION

- AYAs who desired support from a peer navigator reported poorer psychosocial wellbeing.
- In contrast, AYAs interested in becoming peer navigators reported better psychosocial wellbeing, but more anxiety and loneliness than those not interested being navigators.
- Institutions should consider screening patient-reported outcomes to identify those in need of navigation and ensure navigators are provided with support and opportunities to connect with fellow peer navigators.
- Findings from this study informed the development of a digital peer navigation program for AYA focusing on lymphoma, sarcoma, breast and testicular cancer (referred to as PeerNav™). An RCT of the AYA PeerNav™ program is underway.

REFERENCES

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