DIGITAL SKILLS IN THE CANCER HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE: INSIGHTS FROM THE TRANSiTION PROJECT ON EXISTING TRAINING GAPS

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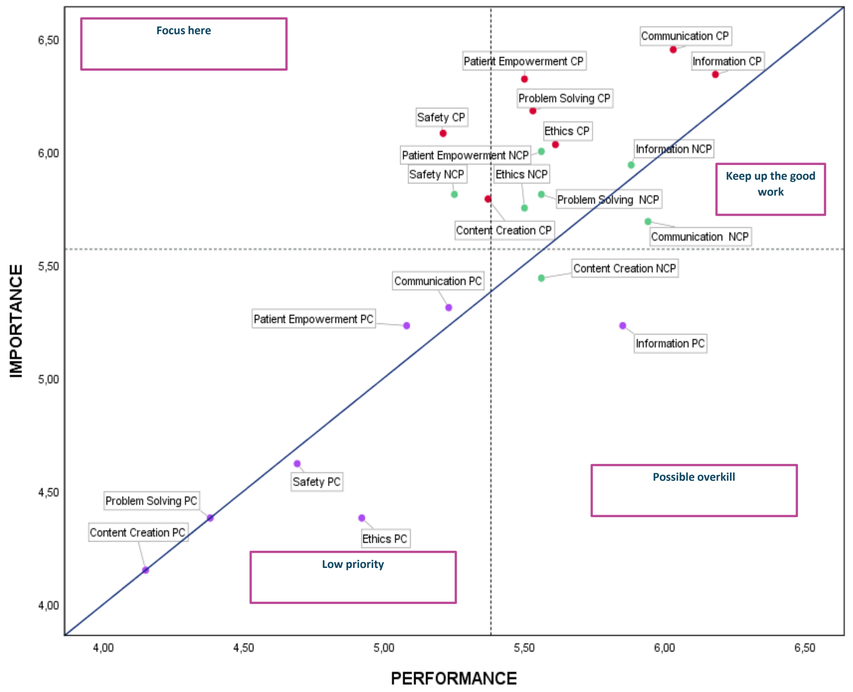
Background: Digital technology has altered the landscape of cancer care in numerous ways across the disease continuum. In order to sustain the introduction and uptake of digital solutions in cancer care there is need to achieve and maintain adequate levels of digital health literacy. However, there are significant challenges posed by the inadequate training and continued education among clinical and non-clinical cancer healthcare professionals. The EU Beating Cancer Plan in Europe has prioritized the development of targeted digital skills training programs for cancer care providers. This effort was initiated by undertaking a comprehensive gap analysis to identify specific gaps in the training needs of cancer healthcare professional in digital skills.

Methods: The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) method was utilized to compare the performance and importance that clinical professionals, non-clinical professionals and patients/caregivers place on seven digital skills: Information, Communication, Content Creation, Safety, e-Health Problem Solving, Ethics, and Patient Empowerment.

Results: 67 participants across 11 European countries evaluated the digital skills. Diverse perspectives were recorded with clinical professionals acknowledged the need for a comprehensive training program, whilst non-clinical professionals and patients/caregivers attributed more importance on specific digital skills. Digital Patient Empowerment and Safety skills emerge as the highest priorities for both clinical and non-clinical professionals. Conversely, non-clinical professionals assigned lower priority to digital Content Creation skills and patients and caregivers to digital Information and Ethical skills. IPA revealed discrepancies in digital Communication skills across groups (H=6.50; p<.05) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Comparative IPA graph CP vs. NCP vs. PC.



Conclusions: There is a pressing need for comprehensive digital skill training for oncology healthcare professionals across diverse backgrounds and healthcare systems in Europe. Urgent areas of priority include **Digital Patient Empowerment** and **Safety Skills**. These findings provide a knowledge base for designing digital skills training programs, promoting a holistic approach that integrates the perspectives of the various stakeholders involved in digital oncology care

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