

Themes of Early Integration of Palliative Care into Oncology Care: A Nurse Practitioner Model

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Abstract

Early integration of palliative care into standard oncology care is quality cancer care. Evidence suggests palliative care improves the quality of life of advanced cancer patients and their families when introduced early in the disease trajectory. The provision of palliative care services within an oncology care center supports themes of early integration. The incorporation of an ambulatory palliative care clinic in an oncology care center is an example of an integrative service model. Yet, integration must represent much more than a physical presence and include comprehensive and holistic care, collaboration, communication and availability of service. Palliative Care Nurse Practitioners have the required knowledge and skills to fully support integration in an oncology care setting. In January 2018, a palliative care clinic, managed by a nurse practitioner, was established in a regional oncology care center. Patients were referred to the clinic by their oncologist or primary care provider. Reasons for referral were primarily pain and symptom management. Over a six-month period, greater than 100 patients were followed by the nurse practitioner. Pain and symptom management, advance care planning, collaborating with other health care professionals, advocacy, arranging diagnostic testing, and policy development represented the work of the Nurse Practitioner. Using evidence-based assessment tools patients reported improved pain and symptom management and overall better quality of life. Moreover, patients reported increased satisfaction with their health care because of the accessibility of the clinic's services. This presentation will outline: how incorporating a palliative care clinic in an oncology care center supports themes of early integration and leads to improved patient outcomes; and the leadership roles Nurse Practitioners assume in supporting early integration.

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Biography

Claudette Taylor completed her PhD from the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Following completion of her doctorate, she obtained a Nurse Practitioner Diploma from

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