The Role of the Cancer Nurse Specialist

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What are Cancer Nurse specialist’s?

- Cancer nurse specialists are registered nurses with an advanced knowledge of oncology and post registration experience in the area of oncology.
- They usually specialise in a specific tumour area making them clinical experts in evidence based nursing practice within a speciality area.
- The cancer nurse specialist is a core member of the multi disciplinary team (MDT) and they play a key role in the delivery of the care and treatment that is required for each patient.
- They provide physical, psychological and emotional support to cancer patients and their relatives

*(National Cancer Action Team 2010)*
Why do we need Cancer Nurse Specialists?

- Each year just over 335,000 people are diagnosed with cancer in the UK. There are currently two million people living with cancer and it is estimated that this will double to four million people by 2030.

- The cancer journey is complex and disjointed.

- One to one nurse specialist care is central to the patient-focused ‘no decision about me without me’ principle set by the Department of Health. (allowing patient involvement through the whole of the pathway).

- Evidence suggests that the role of a “key worker” is vital in ensuring that the patients cancer journey is co-ordinated effectively and patients receive high quality care.

- People are living beyond cancer and the drive is to improve on going patient care for “cancer survivors” as well as “cancer patients”. Cancer nurse specialists are in a vital position to do this.

- Evidence shows that cancer nurse specialist's improve patient experience of care, reinforce patient safety, increase productivity and demonstrate leadership……

Stages of the Cancer Journey

“Bridging the gap”
Where does the cancer nurse specialist come in?

CNS

Acting as a key worker across the whole care pathway

Advanced communication and advocacy for patients and relatives

Empathy

CNS

Excellent decision making and advanced clinical skills

CNS

Reinforce safety and quality care

CNS

Information giving and support

CNS

Demonstrate leadership and increase productivity and efficiency
A Day in the Life of a HPB CNS

“A Typical Friday”

8am-11am - Attend liver MDT- patients discussed from all over the network. Primary and secondary liver cancer.

11am - Back to office. Sort phonecalls, MDT work, catch up on emails,

11.30am - 2WW Fast track comes through email- triage and sort out appointment.

11:45am - Phone call from the ward- can we visit a patient prior to discharge?

11:50am - Phone call from mid-yorks CNS- ? MDT outcome/plan

11:55am - Phone call from Oncology Spr- can we go and break bad news on the ward with them?

12 - Go to oncology clinic- chemotherapy patient to see

13.30 - Pancreas surgical clinic. 3x new patients, 2 x bad news plus a few follow ups.

5pm - get back to office- sort out urgent referrals, phone calls to GP, more phone calls re MDT

5.10pm - Phone call from chemotherapy patient- pyrexial and feeling unwell- liaise with oncology assessment area and organise admission.

6pm - Go home.
Working together is the key to success

- No one can achieve quality care on their own. They key to success is to work together.

- Effective communication between local and network teams.

- Being made aware of patients - the earlier the better.

- Appropriate referrals to MDT and specialist centre.

- Communication with patients is key. Prepping before coming to specialist centre.

*We can never have too much information, as long as it is correct*
Evidence proves that Cancer nurse specialist's can help to improve quality of life for people with cancer through assisting with decision making, symptom management and emotional support, as well as improving services.

The need for cancer nurse specialist's is only going to increase as cancer services get bigger and busier year on year.

Cancer nurse specialists are in a prime position to enhance and continue to improve cancer services in the future and improve on the cancer patients experience overall.

There is lots of work going on to expand the CNS role further such as:
- Education (local and national)
- Mentoring/clinical supervision/peer support
- Peer review
- Service development and innovation
- Nurse led clinics
- Survivorship/living beyond cancer initiative
“You treat a disease, you win you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you will win no matter what the outcome”
Patch Adam's

Macmillan's nine outcomes
By 2030, the 4 million people living with cancer in the UK will say:

- I was diagnosed early
- I understand, so I make good decisions
- I get the treatment and care which are best for my cancer, and my life
- Those around me are well supported
- I am treated with dignity and respect
- I know what I can do to help myself and who else can help me
- I can enjoy life
- I feel part of a community and I’m inspired to give something back
- I want to die well
How to contact the HPB CNS Team in Leeds?

Opening hours- Monday to Friday- 9-5pm.
Contact number: 0113 2068601 (internal ext 68601)
Email: leedsthtr.HPBnursesleeds@nhs.net
References

- Yorkshire Cancer Network (2013)- Recommendations for the development of the clinical nurse specialist (CNS) role in cancer.