



Learning Sessions for Alliance's Annual
Conference
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Poster Board 8:

Understanding Colorectal Cancer Patients Experiences With Family Practitioners in Canada

Presenter:

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Description:

Colorectal cancer (CRC) persists as a leading cause of death in Canada, prompting an investigation into the diagnosis experiences of patients through an online questionnaire. This study explored the pre-diagnosis, eventual and post-diagnosis experiences of CRC patients to identify gaps in care and pinpoint overlooked factors that could optimize CRC care.

Poster Board objectives and learning outcomes:

- Describe key aspects related to colorectal cancer awareness among patients.
- Recognize barriers and enablers that exist throughout a patient's diagnosis pathway.
- Recognize the significance of patient-centred care for delivering optimal colorectal care.

Full description:

Challenge:

The diagnosis process, from symptom onset to diagnosis, involves various barriers and enablers affecting timely diagnosis. Factors such as symptom awareness, dismissal, and misdiagnosis impact patients' diagnosis journeys. Limited studies have explored the perspectives of Canadian colorectal cancer (CRC) patients and the crucial role of primary care physicians (PCPs). Accordingly, this study pinpointed overlooked factors in colorectal cancer care for patients and provided recommendations targeted towards family practitioners to address these disparities to improve CRC care and hopefully lead to improved prognosis and reduction in mortality for Canadian CRC patients.

Action:

The survey (primary component of the study) was developed internally with the Colorectal Cancer Canada (CCC) team and an expert advisory panel of family physicians, who reviewed the questions to ensure medical accuracy. The survey was available in both French and English and was disseminated from November 2022 to February 2023 to CRC patients through CCC's social media platforms, cancer advocacy groups, and Canadian cancer centres. Analysis of the survey data began in May 2023 and a manuscript was developed in September 2023. A research poster was also developed for the study and presented at the Family Medicine Forum conference in October 2023.

Impact:

The study's primary endpoints focused on (1) accessibility to a family practitioner (how many patients had a access to an FP before being diagnosed?) and (2) dismissal and misdiagnosis of CRC (how many felt

dismissed or misdiagnosed by their FPs?). While secondary endpoint of the study considered CRC awareness prior to diagnosis such as symptoms, and screening, and that CRC could occur in those aged 50 years and younger (i.e., EAO CRC). The key learnings from the study revealed that (1) most patients did have access to a FP before their CRC diagnosis; (2) younger patients were more likely to be misdiagnosed and dismissed by their FPs; and (3) most respondents lacked knowledge in all three CRC awareness aspects.

Trajectory:

The findings from this study will be used to plan future initiatives for Colorectal Cancer Canada's (CCC) 'My Symptom Matter' (MSM) program, will address training modules, decision-making models, care guidelines, and primary care provider (PCP) toolkits to increase awareness among PCPs on early detection and evaluation of CRC signs and symptoms and among the public to educate them about self-identification of CRC symptoms and self-advocacy for care. Further studies are planned to capture the PCP perspective and their experiences in diagnosing CRC, to gain a more holistic view of the diagnosis process the early detection of CRC at first contact The MSM program, aims to improve prognosis and reduce mortality for CRC patients in Canada by advancing early detection of CRC by PCP's.