

iCare - Protocol for the development of a web-based interactive platform to improve health and wellbeing for people living with upper-GI cancer

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OBJECTIVE/ PURPOSE

People living with or caring for someone with cancer often require support to address the unique set of symptoms experienced [1,2]. Tailored technology-based resources to address patients and carers needs are limited [3,4] and there is an urgent need to develop effective support services. In this study we tested the feasibility and useability of an interactive web-based portal designed for people with upper-GI cancer and their carers.

METHODS

Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, and focus workshops with consumers. People living with upper-GI cancer, their carers and consumer representatives were recruited from a national cancer organisation. Participants involved in phone interviews (n=3) were provided with a link to visit a demonstration model of the web-based platform prior to completing surveys or interviews. Participants answered questions related to the suitability of a web-based platform in addressing their needs, the appropriateness of topics included and how information could be delivered. Consumer representatives (n=2) were asked to provide in-depth information about content to be included within each module.

Program modules included information and resources related to: cancer information, carer information, wellbeing, symptom management, supportive care services, social network, diet and nutrition, acceptance and commitment therapy, palliative care and symptom management



RESULTS

Interim results indicate that people living with upper-GI cancer and their carers reported the need for a tailored platform to support them through the cancer journey. Participants liked the appearance of the platform and that content should be delivered through a mix of mediums including, video, audio and static information. Feedback from consumer representatives highlighted where module content can be further developed, such as the inclusion of complementary and alternative medicine, sleep, and communication, with the healthcare team. Further modules could be separated to allow for more in-depth information within each module e.g separating diet and exercise modules.

CONCLUSIONS/ CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

These findings support the concept of a web-based platform for people affected by Uper-GI cancer and highlight areas where supportive care needs can be met with the inclusion of new module content. These findings will inform the refinement of the web-based platform for a future randomised controlled trial.

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