

# Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre

A Richard Pratt Legacy



A multi-site cancer survivorship clinical placement  
program for primary care practitioners

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# Context

- Cancer patients have significant engagement with general practice after completing cancer treatments
- There are increasing calls for formalised models of shared care
- General Practitioners indicate a need for further training to undertake survivorship care



# Background

- In 2015 Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded a pilot clinical placement program:
  - 16 GPs, 12 GP nurses and 9 oncologists participated
  - Participants found the program clinically and professionally valuable
- In 2016 the DHHS provided further funds for an expanded placement program

[Aust Fam Physician](#), 2016 Aug;45(8):606-10.

**A clinical placement program for primary care professionals at a comprehensive cancer centre.**

[Evans J](#), [Nolte L](#), [Piper A](#), [Simkiss L](#), [Whitfield K](#), [Jefford M](#).

**Abstract**

**BACKGROUND:** There is a growing number of cancer survivors and increasing interest in models of patient-centred shared care between oncology and primary care.



# Program development



We built the second program to enable:

- Enhanced knowledge regarding cancer diagnosis, treatment and follow-up
- Greater understanding of discipline-specific roles
- Enhanced linkages and confidence in shared care arrangements
- Greater workforce capacity

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# Program Development

- Expression of Interest process
- Representative advisory committee
- Placements
  - 10 hour placements (made up of MDM/outpatient and follow up clinics)
  - CPD points
  - Financial stipend
- Supporting materials
  - Toolkit
  - Videos
- Evaluation
  - Pre–and post placement questionnaires
  - Focus group
  - Interviews with site based coordinators

# Results

## Collaborating sites

- Austin Health
- Royal Melbourne/Women's
- Western Health
- Peter Mac

## Participants

- 47 generalists: 33 GPs and 16 GPNs
- 29 hospital-based specialists



# Pre-placement survey data (generalists)

- Top learning priorities for generalists included:
  - knowledge of issues that patients can experience after completing cancer treatments (n=37, 76%)
  - knowledge of recommended post treatment care (n=37, 76%)
  - develop links to promote shared care (n=23, 47%)
  - a general understanding of hospital-based oncology care (n=22, 41%)



# Pre-placement survey data (specialists)



## Perceived benefits

- Specialists considered benefits from participation to be:
  - developing links with general practice (n=17, 59%)
  - improved patient care (n=15, 52%)
  - improved communication with general practitioners (n=15, 52%)



# Post-placement survey data

- 100% of generalists felt knowledge gained would be used in practice
- 98% of generalists and 91% of specialists felt the program was relevant to their practice



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# Post-placement survey data (generalists)

Generalists (n=49)	Post placement knowledge	Post placement confidence
Psychosocial support e.g. fear of recurrence	↑	↑
Physical e.g., fatigue	↑	↑
Practical e.g. advice re: work, finances	No change	No change
Providing information on cancer survivorship	↑	↑
Adjusting to life after treatment	↑	↑
Surveillance for cancer recurrence	↑	↑
Follow up cancer care including the management of comorbidities	↑	↑
Coordinating complex care between multiple health disciplines and care settings	↑	↑
Secondary preventative strategies e.g. healthy weight and regular exercise	↑	↑

- Self rated knowledge and confidence
- All of the participants' median scores for all increased during the placement period, with the exception of one item

# Post-placement survey data (specialists)



- Specialists self-reported high baseline levels of knowledge and confidence (pre-placement )
- The majority of median knowledge and confidence scores remained the same following the placement period.

# Challenges

- Recruiting sites outside metropolitan areas
- Difficulty recruiting GPN
- Creating an environment for specialists to learn
- Program administration



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**Slide 12**

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**PA2**

How will you discuss this? That we didn't engage with them for pre placement or that they didn't engage?

Piper Amanda, 31/01/2017

# Discussion

- Participants overwhelmingly indicated that the program was relevant to practice, met learning outcomes, was well organised, and they would recommend the placement to colleagues
- Generalists reported improved knowledge and confidence regarding survivorship care
- Specialists reported limited education opportunities



# Conclusions

- Clinically and professionally valuable
- Feasible across multiple acute care sites
- Generalists and specialists are willing to engage in shared care models
- The program evaluation revealed enablers and barriers to shared care



# Next steps

- Explore an ongoing placement program
- Develop resources, protocols, guidelines to support shared care of survivors
- Develop other education about cancer, cancer treatments and cancer survivorship for generalists





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