

Abstract

Patients newly diagnosed with cancer may experience anxiety that can deter their readiness to learn. Informed patients are more active participants in their care, which can result in better outcomes. This quality improvement project sought to evaluate the effectiveness of a telehealth orientation program in reducing anxiety and increasing knowledge. This project was conducted in a national comprehensive cancer center in the Adult Infusion Center. Patients newly diagnosed with cancer and admitted to the solid oncology service were enrolled in the quality improvement initiative. I used a pretest-posttest intervention design. I assessed profile of moods (POMS) scores of patients pre- and post-intervention to measure changes in anxiety levels. I used a pre- and post-intervention knowledge test to determine any improvement in the patient's knowledge. I used the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test to determine improvements in anxiety levels post-intervention. The test indicates a median difference between pre-intervention anxiety scores and post-intervention anxiety scores, $Z = -2.21$, $p = .027$, such that pre-intervention scores ($Md = 2.58$) were higher than post-intervention scores ($Md = 1.35$). A median difference obtained between pre-intervention knowledge scores and post-intervention knowledge scores, $Z = -2.23$, $p = .026$, such that pre-intervention scores ($Md = 0.20$) were lower than post-intervention scores ($Md = 0.90$). The project was well received by the staff but most stated time commitment as a barrier to project feasibility. These unit-based orientation programs showed effectiveness in improving the anxiety levels of patients newly diagnosed with cancer. The study design can be modified to meet the needs of many specialties and should be further developed to enhance the onboarding process for new patients.

Keywords: Patient Education, Oncology; New Diagnoses; Anxiety; nursing