

Poster Session

HRT1311 – Improving follow-up  
care and wellness for cancer  
patients

5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Sept 2013 Melbourne

**Post Treatment Clinic**

**Presenter(s): Lucy Burns**

St George Cancer Centre – Sydney

# Background

- The Cancer Centre nurses had been aware for some time that some patients were demonstrating symptoms of increased anxiety as their treatment period came to a close.

*They weren't sure what happens next. Who is going to be monitoring them? Do they still need blood tests? When can they go back to work? When will they feel better? They had lots of questions but were not getting enough of the answers. Some patients just want a line drawn to mark the end of their illness and three months after treatment is a good time to do that.*

# A Problem Worth Solving!

- A literature review confirmed that when the cancer treatment is complete, many patients face a variety of short and long term problems including anxiety, depression, fear of recurrence, loneliness, body image changes and effects on family relationships, social environments and finances.
  - For some patients ‘the fear of being abandoned, sudden reduction of the intense clinical attention they had received during the treatment phase and lack of continuity of care during follow-up is a source of anxiety and stress’ (Cox & Wilson 2003).
  - The subject of post treatment clinics has been a common one at oncology and haematology conferences over the last few years but there has been genuine confusion about how to get one started and with what level of staff.

# Finishing Treatment?



..... Not Sure What Happens Next?

..... Want to know what resources  
are available for you now?

## Make sure you are booked in to the Nurses' Post Treatment Clinic.

The clinic provides you with the opportunity to discuss any issues or problems you may be experiencing a few months after completing your chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy, or you might just like some reassurance that everything is ok.



Talk to your nurse or ring the coordinator on 91131175  
to book yourself in.

# Post Treatment Clinic (PTC)

- PTC Established in 2010
- **Recruitment** Posters advertising the PTC have been placed around the waiting rooms. One month prior to the clinic the patient is sent a letter from the Nursing Unit Manager again explaining what the clinic is for and giving them an appointment date and time.
- EORTC QLQ-C30 QoL survey was selected for patients to complete at three stages of the cancer journey – at the beginning of treatment, at the end of treatment and just before the post treatment clinic.
- Patients are advised that attendance is not compulsory and they are free to cancel if they do not wish to attend.

# OUTCOMES

- All patients completing treatment for cancer in the St George Cancer Centre are given the opportunity to attend the Post Treatment Clinic.
- Five patients attended the first clinic in April 2011
- 65 patients have attended the clinic to date all of whom have completed chemotherapy and or radiotherapy

# IMPACT ON CARE

- The impact on patients comes from knowing the end of treatment does not mean the end of caring.
- The patients may not need to come back and visit the nurses three months after treatment has finished, but they know they can if they want to.

# SUSTAINING CHANGE

- All chemotherapy patients are automatically booked in at their last appointment and a more consistent referral pathway for radiation patients is in the process of being developed.
- A template has been inserted into the electronic notes for the documentation of attendance at the PTC. This includes details such as time since treatment, referrals made, issues raised etc