

Exploring “practice-based evidence” to maintain/regain employment for cancer-patients in Belgian oncology care

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Background

For cancer-survivors at working age, labour-participation is part of their quality of life (QoL) and therefore an important element in care-services that aim to enhance QoL. A growing amount of scientific evidence emphasises on the importance of early administrated and hospital-based support of RTW in cancer-survivors.

However, the implementation of available evidence and knowledge on RTW-focused practice in oncological healthcare seems to be very limited.

Objectives

In order to develop a guideline on RTW in cancer-survivors in Belgium, this study inventories practice based evidence to understand what barriers hinder health-care professionals (HcP) to apply the available knowledge. HcP will also be asked about their needs to integrate RTW-oriented knowledge into their practice.

Methods

A scoping review was carried out to update literature that founded a Belgian mimic RCT on hospitalbased RTW-support for cancer-patients. The outcome was used to develop two qualitative studies: 1) in dept interviews with leaders of multidisciplinary teams in oncological care in Belgian hospitals (n =); 2) focus group-discussion with multidisciplinary groups of HcP involved in direct patient-contact with cancer survivors. Analyses of transcribed recordings of both studies will be realised by using Nvivo, with contribution of the members of the research-committee (all co-authors).

Results

The analysis of the first study reveals on one hand the low focus on RTW in hospitals and on the other hand the provision of no cure-related additional services. The need for multidisciplinary team support is recognised but not realised due to lack of time, nuances, knowledge, and specific (assessment-)instruments. Only one of the interviewees declared to use scientific evidence to develop additional care-services including RTW-support. The other interviewees mention that when cancer-survivors themselves have question on work-related issues, they look for specific answers (on case-by-case basis). Few hospitals provide some kind of RTW support (often delivered by volunteers or external organisations), but a great part of the interviewees indicate that they regret to be unable to do so in a systematic way. The second study's focusgroup-discussions are planned in January 2020. Full results will be available in July 2020.

Impact

The identification of the barriers and facilitators that influence the way in which oncologic care-practice can or cannot integrate scientific evidence enables not only to set up policies that enhance hospital based quality of RTW-support. It creates a practice based foundation that will provide knowledge to construct the following steps of an implementable guideline.