

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

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Conference topic relevance:

In collaboration with the Centre of knowledge regarding (dis)ability (of the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance), this project explores how scientific evidence regarding return-to-work (RTW) for cancer patients can be implemented into the practice of health-care oncology services. The study sheds light on what hinders or enables health-care professionals (HcP) in oncology practice to provide early administrated RTW support. Through the identification of facilitators and barriers we aim to develop an RTW guideline that will combine evidence-based practice with practice-based evidence.

Abstract (max 400 words):

Background

For cancer-survivors at working age, labour-participation is part of their quality of life (QoL). Scientific evidence emphasises on the importance of early administrated, hospital-based support of RTW but the implementation of available knowledge in oncological healthcare appears to be limited.

Objectives

This study inventories practice based evidence to understand what barriers hinder health-care professionals (HcP) to apply the available knowledge and what they perceive as ‘good practice’.

Methods

A scoping review updated literature that founded a Belgian mimic RCT on hospitalbased RTW-support for cancer-patients was used to develop two qualitative studies: 1) in dept interviews with leaders of multidisciplinary teams in oncological care in Belgian hospitals (n = 79); 2) focus group-discussion (n=44) 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

Analysis of the first study-part reveals the low focus on RTW in hospitals. 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 need for multidisciplinary team-support is recognised but not realised due to lack of time, finances, knowledge, and specific (assessment-)instruments.

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.

Short biography of presenting author (max 50 words)

Since 1988, Huget Désiron (PhD-OT, Eur. Erg.) specialises in supporting employers and insurance companies in solving return-to-work problems for severely injured employees and those on long-term sick leave. From 2001 on, she is involved in research (e.g.; KULeuven and PXL Hasselt) on supporting return-to-work in cancer survivors.