

Patient Stays Are Reduced When Involving Hospitalists in Inpatient Cancer Care



According to a new study, published in the Journal of Hospital Medicine, it was found that the inclusion of hospitalists in the co-management of care for cancer patients resulted in decreased length of patient hospital stay, increased inpatient hospital capacity, as well as reduced stress level among oncologists.

Hospitalists specialise in caring for patients admitted to the hospital; their role is pertinent and thus reflected by the growth in oncology hospitals programmes at cancer hospitals. However, there still remains a lack of studies to prove their role can impact the length of a patient's time in the hospital.

This study, therefore, aims to fill the gap in that knowledge and determine how co-management of cancer care can have an effect on the stress and burnout of physicians.

Physicians and scientists at Yale School of Medicine and Smilow Cancer Hospital collaborated to examine the impact of hospitalist co-management by comparing real-time outcomes from both the co-management model and from the oncologist-led inpatient services. They tracked patient volume, length of stay, early discharges, discharge time, and the rate of readmission within 30 days of discharge over a six-month period at Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven, U.S.

The team noticed the hospitalist-led program cared for a larger number of patients than the traditional-oncologist service.

Dr. Jensa Morris, an internal medicine specialist at Yale School of Medicine and director of Smilow Hospitalist Service at Smilow Cancer Hospital, said, "we discussed decreasing inpatient length of stay, but our ultimate goal was increasing the time patients can spend at home".

The average length of stay for patients on the traditional-oncologist service (5.47 days) was longer than for patients on the hospitalist co-managed program (4.71 days). With more patients staying for shorter length of time, physicians found they were able to have more time to provide care for many more patients.

It must be noted that there was no difference in illness severity for patients under either care model.

The study concluded with oncologists experiencing lower stress levels when working with the hospitalist service. It became less stressful and less time consuming which made it easier to manage other clinical and research responsibilities.

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