

Macmillan Primary Care Cancer Education Project, Cheshire and Merseyside

Key findings of the GPs (Partners, Locums, and Trainees) and ANPs survey conducted in Oct/ Nov 2019

Many thanks for participating in the Macmillan Primary Care Cancer Education Project survey. At your request, we have summarised the findings and our next steps.

Background

One of the strategies put forward in the *Cancer Strategy for England (2015-2020): Achieving World-Class Cancer Outcomes* is early access interventions in order to increase cancer diagnoses at stages 1 and 2 and to prevent emergency presentations¹. Early cancer diagnosis improves chances of survival, as cancer is likely to be treated successfully before it spreads and hence becomes more difficult to treat.

Current cancer survival rate is more than 10 years and with the general year on year improvement in cancer survival rates, cancer survivors sometimes experience problems with managing consequences of cancer treatments, the risk of cancer recurrence, other long-term morbidities, physical, emotional and practical impacts of cancers which affect their general wellbeing and quality of life.

To achieve early cancer diagnosis, and to also support patients living with and beyond cancer, General Practitioners (GPs) and Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) would need more awareness, knowledge and confidence in improving the quality of care provided².

In 2017, over 170 GPs and ANPs across Cheshire & Merseyside responded to a questionnaire about cancer in primary care. Education was highlighted as a key area to enable colleagues to provide optimal support for their patients.

There is currently an inconsistent and unequal access to cancer education for primary care staff across Cheshire and Merseyside. With the support of Macmillan funding and in collaboration with The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, the Macmillan Primary Care Cancer Education Project GP survey was undertaken to assess the feasibility of setting up a primary care cancer education repository at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre.

Objectives of the survey

¹ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/national-cancer-transformation-programme-2016-17-progress.pdf>

² <https://www.guidelinesinpractice.co.uk/cancer/gps-can-support-patients-experiencing-consequences-of-cancer/453740.article>

The GP survey assessed:

- Current access to cancer education courses;
- Gaps in provision of cancer education;
- How cancer education should be delivered to GPs, trainees, locums and ANP across Cheshire and Merseyside

Methods

A web-based survey (generated via survey monkey) was disseminated to GPs/ GP trainees/ Locum and ANPs across C&M. GP Cancer Leads, CCG Cancer managers, Clinical Directors, GP Leads, CRUK facilitators and Macmillan GP advisors across C&M assisted with survey dissemination. Hard copies of questionnaires were also distributed at PLT sessions and at GP events. Survey responses were collected between 21st October and 29th November 2019. One hundred and eighteen (118) responses were obtained. A summary of the findings is presented below.

Findings

- 118 colleagues completed the survey across Cheshire and Merseyside, with 50% of responses from 4 CCGs: (i) West Cheshire CCGs (16%); East Cheshire (13%); South Sefton (13%) and Liverpool (12%).
- 69% work as partners or salaried GPs.
- Slightly over half of the participants spend in excess of 4 hours a year learning about cancer related topics (Fig. 1 below).
- Most participants receive face-to-face education locally with just over a quarter attending courses and conferences in Cheshire and Merseyside. The above is generally in protected time and/or during the day with a preference to be delivered by a local specialist (Figs. 2,3).
- Participants mostly access cancer education through reading, attending face to face sessions and via online interactive modules (Fig. 4)
- Colleagues indicated that more knowledge would be required in immunotherapies and prehab/rehab, supporting young people and children with cancer, prehab/ rehab, long term-consequences of cancer and personalised care (Fig 6).

Fig. 1- Time spent on learning about cancer

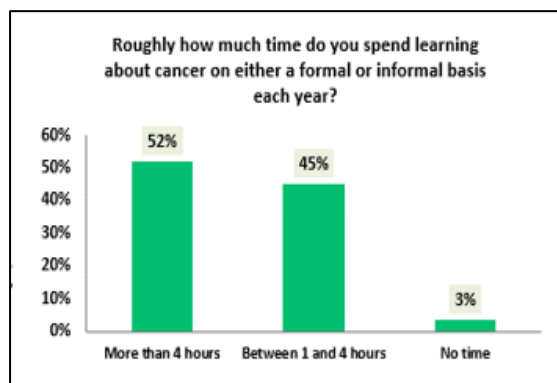


Fig. 2- Delivery of cancer education by local cancer specialists

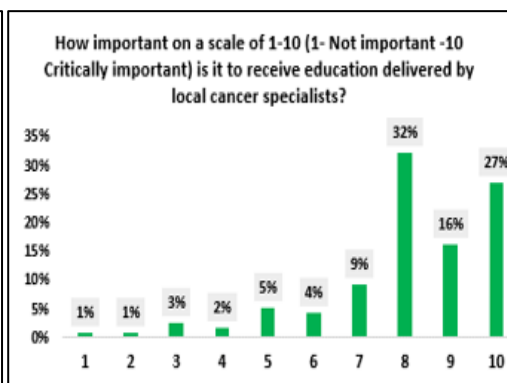


Fig. 3- When face-to-face education is attended Fig. 4- How cancer education accessed

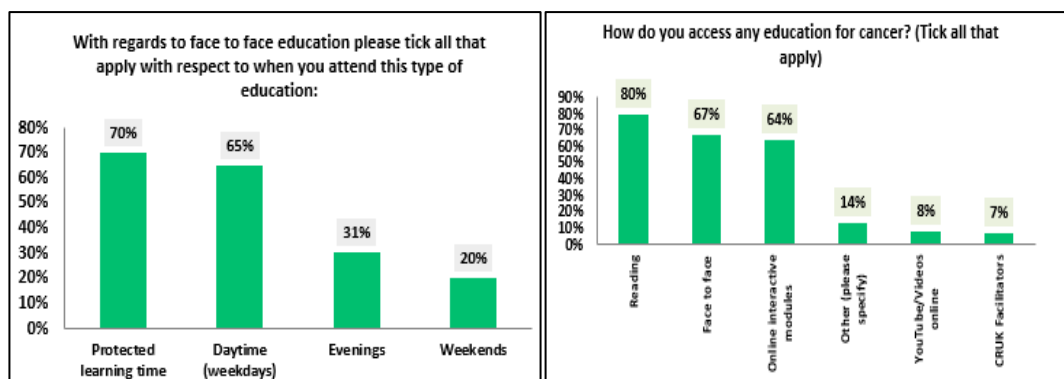


Fig. 5- Standard cancer education resources accessed in the past year

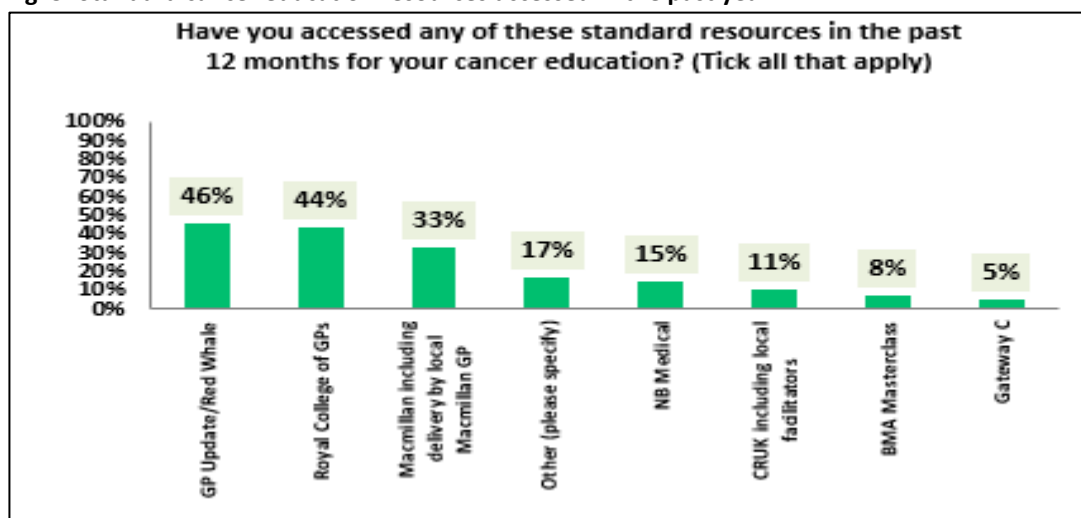


Fig. 6- Weighted average of GP/ANP knowledge on selected cancer topic areas

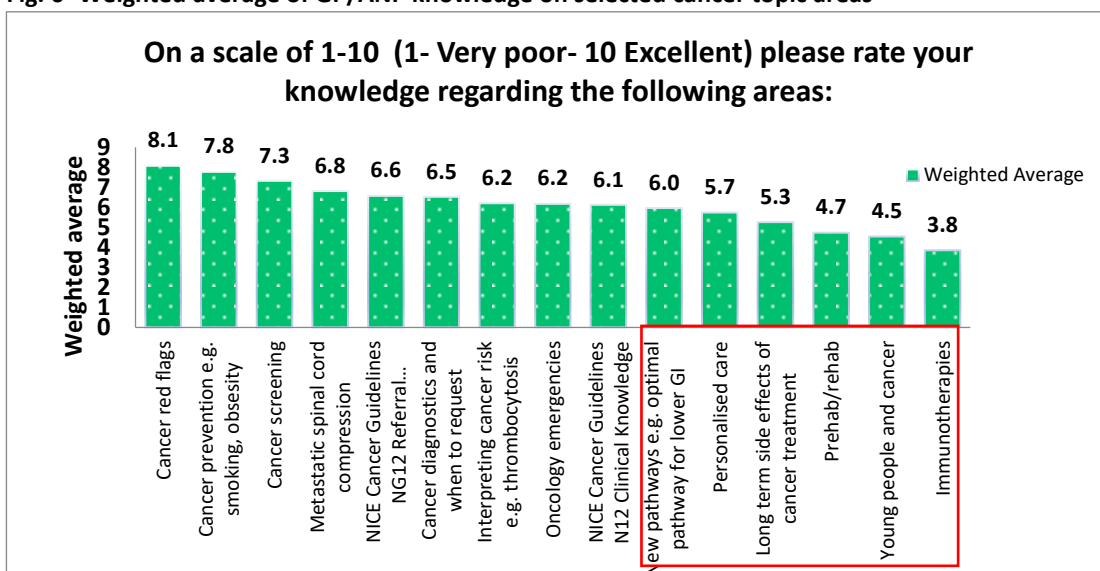


Fig. 7- Provision of an online cancer education repository

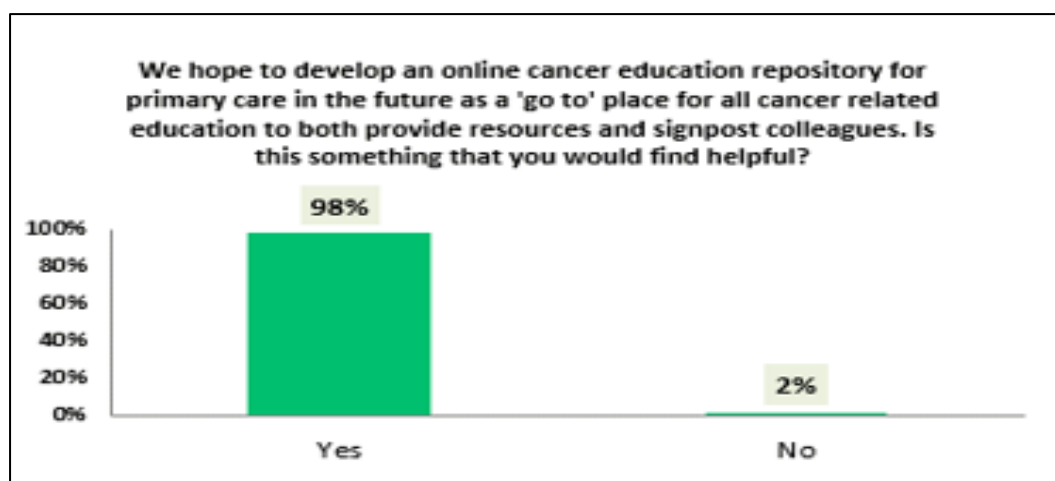


Fig 8: Word cloud below highlighting the suggestions and ideas of participants on the online cancer education repository



Conclusion

Survey conducted with GPs and ANPs across Cheshire and Merseyside revealed that over half of the participants spend more than 4 hours a year learning about cancer education and learning undertaken mostly during PLT, daytime (weekdays). Participants indicated more educational support in immunotherapies and prehab/rehab, supporting young people and children with cancer, prehab/ rehab, long term-consequences of cancer and personalised care. Whilst participants accessed cancer education via reading resources, attending face-to-face sessions and through online interactive modules, there was a clear expression of interest in the provision of an online cancer education repository in Cheshire and Merseyside as indicated by 98% of participants. Most participants commented that the cancer education online repository should be easy to navigate, contain bite-sized information, must be up to date and should contain summarised NICE cancer guidelines, local referral pathways and information on immunotherapy and red-flag summaries. These findings would be compiled, in addition to findings from surveys conducted with primary care nurses, health care assistants and non- clinical staff, for the primary care cancer education strategy development for Cheshire and Merseyside; 2020-2025.

If you would like more information about the survey or are interested in supporting the project, please contact:

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