Multidisciplinary Survivorship Care

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Significance and Background:
There are more than twelve million cancer survivors in the United States, and as treatments improve, this number will grow. Because there are positive and negative effects of cancer treatment, and concerns about residual treatment toxicities, recurrence, and secondary malignancies, there is increased need for specialized care of this population once active treatment is complete.

Survivor Care
- Quality of life questionnaire
- Treatment summary
- History and physical
- Plan of Care
- Recommendations from interdisciplinary team
- Information sent to primary care physician

Evaluation:
Feedback from pilot patients was unanimously positive. Many patients felt they would have benefited from survivor services soon after treatment completion. Several felt that a cancer diagnosis, although stressful, helped them focus on a healthy lifestyle. There were requests for smoking cessation, weight management, yoga, acupuncture, meditation and exercise programs.

Discussion:
Survivorship is a challenging part of the cancer experience continuum. After treatment completion, patients have a road to recovery that is traveled much easier with support. A multidisciplinary survivorship program can address the myriad issues facing today’s survivors, and help them achieve and maintain physical and emotional wellness.

Purpose:
At Lehigh Valley Health Network, a multidisciplinary clinic, Survivor PLACE (Program for Living after the Cancer Experience) was devised to meet the needs of patients who completed treatment, but still had physical, emotional, or rehabilitative concerns. The goal of Survivor PLACE is to ease transition from focused oncology care to primary care, with emphasis on surveillance, support, and advocacy.

Interventions:
Patients referred to Survivor PLACE received a pre-visit quality of life questionnaire. This was reviewed by the team: oncology nurse practitioner, registered dietician, physical therapist, social worker and oncology nurse who summarized the session. Having the assessment in advance allowed inclusion of genetics counselors, sex therapist, or financial counselors if needed. At an initial two hour visit, patients had a history and physical examination, discussion of nutrition, bone health, exercise and psychosocial concerns. Each patient received a disease specific treatment summary, listing staging, procedures, treatments, and complications of therapy. Summary copies were sent to designated care providers. The team then devised a survivorship care plan listing recommendations for surveillance and follow up care. The entire packet, with each team member’s assessment, was given to the patient and copied to the primary care providers.

Estimated Number of Cancer Survivors in the United States from 1971 to 2004

Survivor PLACE Plan of Care

Survivorship is a challenging part of the cancer experience continuum.

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