European Partnership for Action Against Cancer (EPAAC)

D10.1: EONS/EPAAC Putting evidence into practice
Workshop Evaluation Report

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Final Report

Putting Evidence into Practice: Euro PEPs: Work package 7. Developing clinical guidelines

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Abstract

This project was co-funded by the European Commission’s Joint Action, the European Partnership Action Against Cancer (EPAAC) and European Oncology Nursing Society (EONS). The aim of the project was to Europeanise and translate USA clinical guidance that provided a synthesis of the evidence for symptom management with clear guidance on what is evidence based practice. Additional funding through an EONS translation grant extended the translation of the PEPs material (from French, German, Dutch, to Croatian and Slovenian languages). A self-assessment tool for implementation was developed the PICO-Action tool to help the nurses identify what interventions were evidence based in their practice and how they were going to make changes in their clinical settings. Two workshops were provided to give nurses and their managers the skills to make change and implement the guidance. The team also obtained further support from the Catalan Institute of Oncology, Barcelona for a second workshop to reach out to ‘hard to reach’ populations in CEE and promote good practice in symptom management in cancer care. Evaluations from the nursing participants identified that the workshop plus the tools helped influenced implementation and improved their symptom management in practice.

Introduction and background

Healthcare delivery is becoming more complex and keeping up to date in relation to the evidence is challenging but particularly difficult for nurses in Europe where access to latest research is not always available in the language of that country. Furthermore training is lacking in how to use existing evidence as well as nurses feeling disempowered to make change. Clinical guidelines are one of the factors that lead to quality improvement, as well as
enhancing cost effectiveness and job satisfaction they improve patient care (Oborn 2010). Factors influencing sustainability of clinical guidelines is the ability to modify and fit to local context, leadership and workforce attitudes to change as well as education and training for the team on how to use them (Medves et al 2010).

The aim of this project was to educate and support nurses and managers to develop and utilise more widely practice based clinical guidelines (CG) and from this improve cancer patient’s symptom management and care. The project was conducted in 2 phases of work; phase 1 was translation and production of the Euro PEPs (French, German, Dutch, Slovenian and Croatian), clinical guidance for symptoms commonly managed by nurses. Phase 2 was an implementation phase where the Euro PEPS were disseminated through a supported programme with the use of a self-assessment implementation tool. Evaluation was conducted at baseline and at 3 months from workshop.

Method and process

The EONS project team provided 2 workshops; the first for Western Europe and a second workshop for Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries with the aim to promote good practice in symptom management in cancer care. This component of the EONS workshops was particularly important in tackling inequalities in health services in Europe through the implementation of evidence based toolkits (Euro PEPs) to improve subsequent patient outcomes. Fundamental to this was the sharing of best practices and available evidence among European Oncology nurses and managers to enhance symptom management.

Phase 1: Product and enduring outcomes

- The USA PEPs were reviewed in the first quarter of 2012. The first round was done by 5 expert panels each having 5-7 members who individually reviewed the US guidelines and provided comments and recommendation for the “Europeanized " version of the guidelines in writing. The first results were discussed via teleconferences and consolidated to a set of review material by the review group leaders symptom by symptom for further discussion.

- A second round of reviews was held in Geneva on the 26-27th April in a workshop where the reviews were presented and discussed by the symptom group leaders and the EONS lead experts Sara Faithfull and Anita Margulies.

- The results of the completed review were sent back to ONS (USA) for their comments and discussed in depth via teleconference in the second quarter.

- In the third quarter the PEPs material was assembled and compiled for translation into German, Dutch and French. The translations were delivered in August and early September and were distributed to expert reviewers for proof reading. The English version of all 5 PEPs guidelines (Lymhedema, Pain, Dyspnea, Radiodermatitis, Peripheral Neuropathy) were professionally formatted and turned to an easy to use tool for nurses and managers. The Euro PEPs are colour coded for easy distinction; each Euro PEP is divided into several parts as follows: Icons and explanations, How to use this guide, Quick view, Expert opinion, Assessment tools, Definitions, References, Evidence tables.
Phase 2 Implementation

The first Putting Evidence into Practice (PEP) workshop took place in Brussels on the 21-22nd September under the leadership of Prof Sara Faithfull and Anita Margulies. With the participation of 16 participants - invited after a competitive selection process in two-member teams of a nurse and her/his manager - and 9 faculty/organizers, the workshop was a real success. Guest speakers from across Europe were invited as well as Marc Irwin from the USA who had experience in developing and implementing similar guidelines in the USA. The workshop over 1.5 days was dedicated to the introduction of the Euro PEPs symptom guidelines in a highly interactive course design and offered opportunities for practicing the use of the tools and sharing experiences on symptom management as well as on the use of guidelines in clinical practice by Oncology nurses and their managers. Participants were provided with a comprehensive course manual containing information about the programme, the faculty / speakers, handouts of the presentations, the PICO self-assessment tool, samples of related scientific literature, and the Euro PEPs workbook. Feedback from participants was that the workshop was excellent and had provided an opportunity to influence practice.

The second workshop ran in October 2013 with 10 candidates primarily from CEE countries. This course replicated the first and built on the feedback from the first course.

Quotes from participants on the most useful aspects of the workshop were across both the symptom knowledge and updates to the skills and plans for implementation. The workshop provided me with "specialists on site and just sufficient amount of time on symptoms". The focus on implementation was also appreciated with one participant highlighting the way the interactive nature helped "to bring theory and practice (together) and actually make a plan you can start when you get home". This was key to the managers in that "developing actions because we review evidence regarding sustaining improvement in practice". For some the Euro PEPs were valuable "the course materials very valuable for my future project. One wouldn't go without the other".
The 3 month follow-up of participants to see if their action plans had been able to change symptom management practice and what issues they had encountered in implementation. Several of the participants were able to implement the guidance and change practice to improve patient care. Characteristics of teams who were able to implement guidance worked across the multi-disciplinary team as well as focused on one symptom improvement rather than many. Hospitals and cancer services that was more receptive to change where there was no existing symptom guidance before or uncertainty. Success from the workshops was in that it widened participant’s skills in implementation and shared best practice. Qualitative comments back were that implementation improved patient outcomes by “better drug administration.. and development of education materials for patients and colleagues”. Areas that participants felt were most valuable was advice on how to engage stakeholders and skills in relation to implementation.

Conclusion

The nurses and managers found the workshops helpful in developing skills for implementation of clinical guidelines and working together on a plan of action to implement. Using a team approach to training in the workshops improved the ability to make change in practice. The PICO and Action self-assessment tool helped nurses plan ahead for practical change. Evidence summaries and quick guides gave the nurses the tools to evaluate their own management. Learning from the project was that to sustain change required multidisciplinary team involvement. Participants required support to implement more widely the symptom care improvements. Outcomes from the project were that the nurses were motivated to improve patient information, enhance medications management and change practice. Final versions of completed Euro PEPs will be available on the EONS web site for open access by the end of March 2014.

References
