European Partnership for Action Against Cancer (EPAAC)

D12.1: REPORT On Communication Skills Training

January 2014
REPORT
On
Communication Skills Training

provided by the International Psycho-Oncology Society (IPOS)
in the framework of European Partnership on Action Against Cancer (EPAAC)
WorkPackage7 (WP) on Healthcare – Psychosocial Oncology Action
held at “Prof.Dr. Ion Chiricuta” Institute of Oncology (IOCN)
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
October 24-25, 2013

The Training Course on Communication Skills was organized by IPOS in collaboration with the Psychosocial Oncology Action under EPAAC-WP7 on Healthcare together with IOCN on behalf of Romanian Ministry of Health (MoH).

IOCN hosted the course.

IPOS facilitators were Prof. Darius Razavi and Dr. Luzia Travado, also coordinator of the Psychosocial Oncology Action EPAAC-WP7; and Dr. Degi Csaba IPOS Romanian representative contributed to organization.

IOCN – was represented by Dr. Anca Bojan, IOCN Medical Manager and Florina Pop as Clinical Psychologist and MoH was represented by Dr. Florian Alexandru Nicula, EPAAC Steering Committee MoH Romanian representative.

Registration of participants was available online on IOCN Website, and 33 medical doctors finally registered and participated to the course (list attached).

A pre-course meeting of organizers with 6 future psycho-oncology trainers took place as they were observers and assistants during this first training for doctors and will be responsible in the future in rolling-out training in clinical psycho-oncology network (Adriana Baban, Armeana Zgaia, Degi Csaba, Laura Radu, Madalina Sucala, Sivia Golita – in alphabetical order).

Course agenda is attached and was fully respected.

Course started with a warm welcome of organizers, followed by Dr. Luzia Travado presentation of EPAAC framework, WP7 Healthcare – Psychosocial Oncology Action objectives on Communication Skills and Psycho-Oncology Care, and reasons of decision to organize both trainings in Romania.

After the opening Dr. Travado did a brief introduction of “Why oncology needs psychosocial care? The IPOS new standard in quality cancer care”. Followed by Prof. Darius Razavi who delivered a comprehensive presentation on “The new challenges in Communication with patients and families”, regarding the evidence based role and benefit of training to improve communication skills.

After the presentations Prof. Darius Razavi organized groups and mediated plenary discussions on vignettes decided within groups, illustrating with role-playing the communication skills to be learned and experienced.

Participants proved to be very interested in improving their communication skills and were active at all group exercises regarding breaking bad news situation, collusion, transition to palliative care, dealing with high emotional situations, among others. One of the situations consisted of communicating to a young woman wife of a friend of communicator having bilateral stage III breast tumors just confirmed, and another telling
to a patient with acute leukemia that all treatment protocols proved to have no response and she/he is going to die in few months as no curative but only palliative care seems to be recommended for the rest of her/his lifetime.

At the end of the training, organizers, faculty and participants concluded on some main common activities as output on this action:

1. Report endorsed to all organizers.
2. IPOS will organize through Romanian Psycho-Oncology Society translation and dissemination of professional standards for clinical network; RPOS will be enlarged becoming national representative.
3. IOCN – MoH through Commission on Cancer will endorse IPOS standard on quality cancer care and propose mandatory psycho-oncology assistance for at least all 3 comprehensive cancer centers and a total 8 regional cancer treatment units: IOCN will pilot introduction on IPOS Standards of institutional distress screening for all IOCN patients as the 6th monitored vital sign.
4. Finally common efforts and lobby to MoH and Ministry of Labor will be done in order to introduce psycho-oncology subspecialty, and to define specific units in the structure of comprehensive cancer centers.

Outcome:
- Feedback from the participants: high satisfaction 4.8/5; general evaluation: 82% rated it as very useful 83% said yes that they will incorporate suggestions received from the workshop into their interviewing techniques; 90% said yes believe their communication techniques have improved with the workshop;
- dissemination of the initiative at IOCN website https://www.iocn.ro/Noutati/Developing-communication-abilities-and-psychosocial-oncological-assistance-an-EPAACWP7-objective--eID516.html;
- 6 psychologists doing training for trainers with the commitment to cascade the training in the future to disseminate it throughout the country – Romanian psycho-oncology society with the support of Csaba Degi will lead this process with the collaboration of the Faculty of Psychology of University of Babes Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca and IOCN.