Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding primary care-oncology relationships within a changing healthcare environment

Version: 0 Date: 20 May 2019

Reviewer: Daniel Coletti

Reviewer's report:

Data in this report describe a multiple case study of 14 primary care practices to describe the nature of collaboration between these practices and oncology programs. This manuscript reports on a secondary qualitative analysis of data from a larger investigation of cancer survivorship in primary care. Field notes, stakeholder interviews, and review of practice workflows and policies were reviewed to identify descriptors of primary care-oncology relationships.

A total of nine practices demonstrated features illuminating existing relationships between the practices and oncology. Results were categorized into (a) practices that were part of larger health systems or networks, and which tended to rely on formalized channels of communication such as Electronic Health Records; and (b) five practices unaffiliated with larger hospitals or systems that tended to rely on more informal, interpersonal interactions to communicate and coordinate care. Implications for study findings were discussed as incorporating both the more systematized interactions of more formal systems with the more personalized approach of unaffiliated practices.

The report addresses an under-researched area and is clearly written. In particular, I appreciated the case report structure to illuminate the formal vs. informal dichotomy they found in their data. As a professional who practices in primary care, these results resonate with my personal experiences. I would appreciate a response to the following questions.

a) With over 2000 pages of data, the results are clear but feel somewhat reductive. Did the review uncover secondary themes, perhaps not as striking but of possible relevance in describing primary care-oncology relationships? If not, results might benefit from a clearer description of the assertion made in the discussion that clinicians questioned the quantity, quality, and clarity of their roles during various phases of the cancer process (page 9, lines 31-41).

b) I would like the authors to provide additional comment in the discussions/conclusions on suggested next steps for future research and application of findings in this area.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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