Reviewer’s report

Title: Ambulatory Toxicity Management (AToM) Pilot: Results of a pilot study of a pro-active, telephone-based intervention to improve toxicity management during chemotherapy for breast cancer

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Reviewer: Kathi Mooney

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript is a well written report of a pragmatic pilot study of nurse-led calls to monitor and intervene on unresolved chemotherapy related toxicities for patients at home during the interim between clinic visits. Given the pragmatic, real world implementation, it has a number of significant limitations in terms of the rigor. These are mostly acknowledged in the limitations section. They include adequately tracking the available subject pool, the number approached, the number enrolled vs. declined, the representativeness of the sample vs the population. There are acknowledged issues related to the potential selection basis as the sites were responsible for their own recruitment and did not approach all eligible patients.

However the study did reveal important issues in both conducting such a real world evaluation and challenges for the staff to implement.

This is useful information related to dissemination and implementation. In spite of limitations, the pilot found significant reduction in emergency department use but no effect on hospitalizations when compared to a concurrent control group. The value of the study would be enhanced if the reason for ED visits and hospitalization were reported so there was more information to link the focus of nurse calls and the relationship to ED visits and hospitalizations in the nurse call group and similarly ED/hospitalization chief complaints to know how they relate to unresolved chemotherapy related toxicities for the comparison group.

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