

Bridging the Gap: Integrating Cancer Patients' Lived Experiences into Cancer Care Education

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Context and Approach:

As part of the implementation of the newly established Velindre Oncology Academy, it was identified that there was a lack of inclusion of the patient voice and perspective in some cancer education. As a consequence, a dedicated patient engagement workstream was established, focusing on leveraging patients' lived experiences as a powerful tool for learning and shaping the future of the cancer care curriculum. This project forms part of that workstream.

The objective of this project is to understand how cancer patients' experiences can inform education programmes. This will be done by exploring the impact of patient narratives on health professionals' knowledge and attitudes, and developing and evaluating a framework for integrating patient perspectives into curricula.

Planned Activity:

Research:

Research question: How can cancer patients' lived experiences be effectively integrated into cancer care education programmes to enhance health professionals' understanding of patient-centred care and improve communication and treatment outcomes?

Research outputs:

- Curriculum development – a structured educational framework integrating patient experiences into cancer education for the Welsh workforce
- Training materials – Learning resources such as case studies, videos and patient narratives to enhance workforce training.
- Academic publications – Research articles and conference presentations to disseminate key insights.

Leadership:

- Build and lead a core team to drive research forward.
- Engage key stakeholders.
- Establish clear milestones, assign responsibilities.
- Advocate for the inclusion of patient stories and lived experiences in the training materials and curriculum development discussions.

Education/teaching:

- Provide train the trainer to others delivering training materials.
- Review evaluations of training materials.
- Peer review of education content.

Progress to date:

- The first patient focus group has been undertaken focusing on communications skills, data analysed and themes identified. Changes being made to current communication skills offering to reflect the findings
- Initial focus group was undertaken through the Velindre patient engagement team so in order to capture a wider demographic across Wales, new focus groups are currently being arranged.
- Patients are now represented on the faculty board in order to ensure that their voice is represented when new education is discussed, as well as the review and evaluation of existing education content.

Reflections:

- This is not something that can be achieved alone, building a team of people with differing skills that compliment one another is key.
- The scope of my project initially was to look at all cancer care education but the reality soon set in that this was too large, so the project will be focusing on the education provided in the PGCert in Cancer Care which covers communication, so it will still be able to incorporate the initial focus group on communication skills.

