Reducing the cancer malnutrition burden: highlights of state-wide collaborations in Victoria

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BACKGROUND: Cancer malnutrition is common and associated with poor outcomes. The Victorian Cancer Malnutrition Collaborative (VCMC) program of work is a state-wide collaboration between Peter Mac, Victorian state government, Victorian health services and other interested parties.

AIM: VCMC projects aimed to increase understanding and knowledge, and promote strategies for action in order to address cancer malnutrition.

METHOD: VCMC projects consisted of repeat biennial malnutrition point prevalence studies (PPS), local health service and state-wide projects developing/evaluating resources for patients and health professionals, targeted clinical redesign/implementation projects and system-wide improvements.

RESULTS: The past 8 years of work has:
- Identified the extent of cancer malnutrition in health services & other service gaps
- Developed and evaluated sustainable resources for consumers and clinicians
- Completed >22 local health service and >8 targeted state-wide projects
- Improved clinical pathways of care
- Highlighted clinical practice and education needs regarding cancer malnutrition in the primary care and community sector.

Cancer malnutrition PPS were conducted biennially and have demonstrated a state-wide reduction in malnutrition prevalence from 31% to 23% in 2016.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS: A state-wide collaboration continues and has led to measurable improvements in patient and organisational outcomes, reduced variation through sharing/delivering best practice nutrition approaches, and improved multidisciplinary awareness of cancer malnutrition.


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