

Development of an eLearning package for multidisciplinary clinicians on cancer malnutrition

Lauren Muir¹, Amber Kelaart¹, Karen Donald²

1 Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, East Melbourne, lauren.Muir@petermac.org

2 Faculty Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Victoria, 3800

The negative impact of malnutrition on patient outcomes and health care costs is well established. A 2012 point prevalence study completed across 15 Victorian Health Services identified malnutrition as highly prevalent in the inpatient and ambulatory oncology settings.

A key recommendation from this study was to develop resources for multidisciplinary cancer clinicians to improve awareness, recognition, understanding and timely intervention of malnutrition. In order to provide education to a large number of clinicians, across different disciplines and geographical locations, an eLearning package was the selected approach. The packages developed, provide accurate, consistent and evidence-based information; and enable efficient use of resource that can be used by a range of disciplines, across a number of health services throughout Australia.

Four unique and discipline-specific packages (each with six learning modules) have been developed for doctors, nurses, allied health and community general practitioners. The interactive learning modules provide an opportunity for active learning about malnutrition in oncology, nutritional implications of cancer and cancer therapies, malnutrition risk screening, nutrition intervention and multidisciplinary team involvement. A range of case studies are also presented to consolidate understanding. Multiple subject and education experts have been consulted and contributed to development, content and review of the resource.

The eLearning packages will promote awareness amongst cancer care clinicians of the significant issue of cancer malnutrition, resulting in improved prevention, early identification, as well as appropriate and timely management of this high risk group. This in turn will improve patient care and reduce the burden of malnutrition for individuals and health services.