

## Health service needs (swallowing, nutrition and psychosocial) and personal perceptions of patients attending the Ipswich Hospital Head and Neck Multidisciplinary Clinic: A project protocol

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### INTRODUCTION

- National and international cancer agencies recommend regular involvement of allied health professionals in the provision of supportive care before, during and following treatment for head and neck cancer (HNC)
- Currently at Ipswich Hospital (IPH) HNC Multidisciplinary (MDT) Clinic, there is limited opportunity for swallow, nutrition, and psychosocial screening and as such, minimal early referral for allied health support
- Alternative models of service delivery are therefore required to ensure high risk HNC patients have optimal access to supportive assessment and intervention for swallowing and nutritional deficits within current staffing and service constraints

### STUDY AIM

- To investigate the patient health service needs (particularly swallowing, nutrition and psychosocial) at presentation to the IPH HNC MDT Clinic
- Explore patient experience of attending the IPH HNC MDT. This will more broadly investigate patient perceptions of the clinic



### METHODS

Data collection commenced in June 2019, anticipated to be completed by December 2019.

#### Design:

Cross-sectional prospective study design

#### Participants:

- Patients with a diagnosis of HNC attending IPH HNC MDT will be targeted for recruitment (aiming for 30 participants over 6-12 months)
  - Exclusion criteria: severe cognitive deficits, non-English reading/writing, significant vision, hearing or physical dexterity impairments which would limit ability to participate

#### Procedure:

- Following consent patients will complete an electronic patient-reported screening tool, "ScreenIT", delivered via a computer tablet in the waiting room
- ScreenIT asks participants about the presence and severity of side effects, swallowing/nutrition and distress; and their need for supportive care
- Participants will be contacted by phone 1 week following HNC MDT attendance and asked about their experience. This will involve completion of the Australian Hospital Patient Experience Question Set (AHPEQS) a semi-structured interview around communication, physical space, education, partner in care/support and advice for the HNC MDT

#### Analysis

- ScreenIT data will be extracted from the web source and analysed descriptively using frequencies. AHPEQS data will be analysed descriptively with means/SDs. Interview data will be transcribed verbatim and analysed qualitatively using content analysis



### ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- Equity of access for people with HNC to receive supportive care during HNC MDT
- Implementation of patient screening and early referral for allied health support in alignment with current national and international best practice guidelines
- Delivery of healthcare closer to home
- Enhanced service capability through partnerships and collaboration with other healthcare providers to plan and deliver services
- Preparation for future growth towards tertiary health service
- Improved experience for patients attending IPH HNC MDT

### REFERENCES:

- Wall et al. (2015). *Support Care Cancer*
- Optimal care pathway for people with head and neck cancers. Downloaded from Cancer Council Australia. [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au)
- Wall et al. (2016). *Oral Oncology*



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