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Informal Cancer Caregivers: Assessing and meeting their needs.

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Informal Cancer Caregivers: Assessing and meeting their needs.

Informal caring for someone with cancer may have a detrimental effect on health and well-being. This presentation will cover a programme of work focused on developing best practice to meet the service requirements of informal cancer caregivers. This includes:

Identification of the most appropriate method of assessing need in informal cancer caregivers.

This was achieved through a systematic review of needs assessment instruments. The review identified seven cancer survivor caregiver needs assessment tools. The majority demonstrated some degree of reliability and validity. The NAFC-C was demonstrated potential however it required further psychometric testing. Our group is currently undertaking this.

Assessment of the effectiveness of current psychosocial interventions for informal cancer caregivers.

A Cochrane review has been conducted to assess the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions designed to improve the quality of life, physical health and well-being of informal caregivers of people living with cancer. The review included 14 studies, however the majority were at high risk of bias. Some beneficial effects in terms of caregiver quality of life, distress and symptom burden were observed in three studies. No significant effects were observed for depression or general psychological well-being. Interventions that had a higher degree of 'tailoring' (eg cancer site-specific vs generic interventions) appeared, overall, to perform better.

The development and feasibility testing of a psychological intervention for informal caregivers.

Based on the outcome of the two reviews we are currently developing an intervention to test and confirm the findings from the Cochrane review.