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Background

Men diagnosed with prostate cancer (PC) face treatment-related sequelae that affect their health and quality of life.

The Prostate Cancer Supportive Care (PCSC) Program at the Vancouver Prostate Centre was created in 2013. It is a clinical, educational, and research-based program for men and their family members to address prostate cancer-specific challenges such as erectile dysfunction and urinary incontinence and offers a proactive approach to lifestyle changes in diet and exercise.

The program includes education sessions and associated clinics on the following topics:

- **Introduction to PC and primary treatment options**
- **Management of androgen deprivation therapy related side effects**
- **Pelvic floor physiotherapy for bladder and bowel concerns**
- **Counselling**
- **Exercise**
- **Nutrition**
- **Sexual health and intimacy**
- **Advanced disease management**

Methods

We describe the development and evolution of PCSC’s prostate cancer-focused approach over the last ten years and report metrics from our program’s database.

Results

- **Personnel and clinic space**
  
  A Medical Director and Program Manager set the mission, oversee the day-to-day operations, and hire and manage the allied health clinicians and support staff. Office/clinic space is rotated during the week to accommodate a sexual health RN (1.4 full-time equivalent or FTE), 2 pelvic floor physiotherapists, a nurse practitioner, a registered dietician, a clinical exercise physiologist (all 0.2 FTE), and a clinical counsellor (0.4 FTE).

- **Funding**
  
  Current funding for the PCSC Program is from a grant from the BC Ministry of Health, research grants and contracts, and philanthropic donations. The program is offered to all patients free of charge.

- **Website offerings**
  
  The PCSC website, pcscprogram.ca, offers educational videos, handouts, and other resources. Patients can sign up to attend the real-time live interactive education sessions held each month.

  Locations accessing the website during 2022

  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Attendees, n</th>
<th>Group education, n (# virtual sessions/total sessions)</th>
<th>Clinic Appointments, n (# virtual appointments/total appointments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to PC and primary treatment options</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>945 (35/159)</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual health and intimacy</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>844 (43/122)</td>
<td>1519 (1105/8109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the side effects of ADT</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>376 (25/69)</td>
<td>212 (7/31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelvic floor physiotherapy for incontinence</td>
<td>1304</td>
<td>910 (37/87)</td>
<td>594 (494/2382)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>444 (612/1629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced disease management</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85 (13/30)</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>190 (36/51)</td>
<td>361 (313/599)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>455 (19/70)</td>
<td>674 (586/2167)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The program started offering virtual health appointments starting April 2020.

Conclusions

- The need for PC supportive care is well recognized but may be challenging when the services are fragmented and time-consuming for clinicians or staff to arrange.
- PCSC is a unique survivorship program in that it is prostate-cancer-focused. All PCSC Program modules can be accessed with one registration. It is convenient for patients because it is housed in one location, facilitating communication across disciplines.
- After over ten years in operation, the program has grown in terms of annual participation and the scope of offerings.
- The transition from in-person-only clinics and educational sessions to virtual platforms increased the accessibility of PCSC clinical services for British Columbia PC patients and family members.
- We attribute the success of our program to this model and our team approach to meeting the individual patient’s needs.

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The authors have no relevant conflicts.

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