



Care of the Older Person with Cancer: TOOLKIT

Addressing the needs of the older person in routine cancer care by supporting health services to implement geriatric oncology models of care

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The toolkit aims to start a conversation in health services about what services are currently available and what the possibilities are for first steps moving ahead or a potentially larger focused effort. It provides an opportunity for health services to partner with their local ICS to identify local needs and implementation opportunities in the care of older people with cancer.

Introduction

The Victorian Integrated Cancer Services (VICs) are responsible for implementing the Victorian Cancer Plan. As part of the implementation for 2020 - 2024 Hume Regional Integrated Cancer Service (HRICS) and Southern Melbourne Integrated Cancer Service (SMICS) have led work to support the 'Care of the older person with cancer' with the aim of addressing inequities of care received across the state.

Aim

The project aim was to identify and address unmet needs of older people with cancer by:

- Supporting implementation of geriatric oncology services
- Improving patient experience and outcomes for older people with cancer.

Description

HRICS and SMICS created a Care of the Older Person with Cancer Toolkit as a first step towards supporting improved outcomes through service implementation. This included identification of:

- Current geriatric oncology models of care and service implementation in Australia.
- Components of a comprehensive geriatric oncology service and options for delivery.
- Inequities of service access and options for addressing them proposed.

A review of service provision was undertaken in 2023 which included capacity for additional service provision across the state.



A targeted evaluation was undertaken of health services which implemented components of care to support older people with a diagnosis of cancer following the release of the toolkit as well as VICs staff involved in providing project support.



Results

The Toolkit has been shared with health services and includes examples of existing models of care, potential enablers to support service implementation, and available supports.

Responses from health services and VICs staff indicate that the Toolkit is appropriate and relevant for the audience and the format is user-friendly. It has been effective in supporting development and implementation of service improvements, such as screening, service coordination, and digital solutions.

Conclusion

The Care of the Older Person with Cancer: Toolkit has been developed to assist health services with support from their local ICS, to identify local needs and implementation opportunities in the care of older people with cancer. Evaluation of the Toolkit has highlighted its relevance, effectiveness and benefit as a tool to support service improvement.