ScreenIT - revolutionary app solution for head and neck cancer patients

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Status: Completed

Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) has found a screening App could improve the clinical management of head and neck cancer patients, providing an efficient and effective alternative to additional clinical appointments.

The joint study tested the effectiveness of the ScreenIT App to assess swallowing, nutrition and distress in head and neck cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy.

Computerised screening was found to be consistently more sensitive to patient-reported concerns and distress, and could revolutionise the way patient needs are managed. The study found patients tend to be more honest by identifying a greater number of symptoms and rating them as more severe when using ScreenIT compared to clinicians.

The web-based platform connects patients and their family to our allied health team for additional care from the right professional at the right time during their cancer treatment.

ScreenIT yields all data in five minutes which is timely and efficient for follow-up by our clinicians and also reduces unnecessary appointments allowing patients to spend more time with family or at work, rather than in hospital.

ScreenIT has already seen a 25% drop in unnecessary clinical appointments for patients undergoing cancer treatment, and has saved almost $200,000 through cost efficiencies in one year. ScreenIT is one of 16 finalists for the 2017 eAward of the Year—the People’s Choice Award.

This joint study was conducted by researchers and clinicians at PAH, the University of Queensland, Griffith University, and funded by Cancer Council Queensland. The PA Research Foundation is now funding the implementation of this project at PAH.

Aims & Goals:
The aim is to address the physical, emotional and practical needs of our patients as quickly as possible during treatment to achieve the best quality of life following this challenging diagnosis.

Evaluation/outcomes:
ScreenIT is a person-centred, web-based patient screening tool developed for cancer patients and their families by Queensland Health clinicians and researchers. The ScreenIT prototype system was built and tested at the Princess Alexandra Hospital for patients with head and neck cancer.

Designed as a solution for reducing the cost and burden of cancer, ScreenIT is an innovative, evidence-based platform which quickly assesses patient needs regarding cancer health services. Patients and their family members access ScreenIT from home, or on the go, via a secure web portal. They can input concerns about their unique cancer journey (and treatment) and also access information to support their journey. Information submitted by the patient is securely accessed by health professionals via the web. Using rigorously tested triage criteria and algorithms published by the project team (Wall et al., 2016), referrals and appointments can also be generated and managed, providing personalised, holistic healthcare services in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The ScreenIT prototype demonstrated a 25% reduction in clinically unnecessary appointments for patients. The ScreenIT model of care has been expanded to people with lung, oesophageal, brain or haematological cancers. ScreenIT has been recognised at the local, national and international level and is being implemented at other hospital and health services across Queensland.

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