

Manchester Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Research on Ageing (MICRA)

Seed corn grant 2015

Title: Cancer-related information needs and decision making preferences in people with dementia, their carers and cancer clinicians

Short title: Cancer, Dementia and information needs (Can-DO)

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Very little is known about the cancer experience of people with dementia, in particular their cancer-related information needs and treatment decision-making preferences and priorities. However there is evidence to suggest that compared to having cancer without a co-morbid diagnosis of dementia, those with dementia are less likely to receive preventive screening and are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage of disease and have poorer clinical outcomes.

This research is timely as the UK faces an ageing population and the number of people with dementia will increase and so a greater number of cancer patients are expected to have a form of dementia in the coming years. Our recent audit at The Christie on all patients ≥ 75 years with head/neck cancer at The Christie found that almost 13% had cognitive impairment, including 5 with known pre-existing dementia.

In this study, we will explore the information needs and decision-making preferences of patients with cancer who have a diagnosis of dementia, carers and cancer clinicians using interviews. Patients who have cancer of any type and a diagnosis of dementia will be eligible to take part in the research.

Exploring the perceptions of patients with cancer and dementia, their carers and cancer clinicians would allow us to i) to identify cancer-related information needs of people with dementia and their carers, ii) to describe patient and carer priorities when deciding whether or not to receive cancer treatment and iii) to identify cancer clinicians perceptions of information provision and decision-making processes when caring for patients with cancer and dementia.

The work funded by the MICRA seedcorn grant will allow us to develop an information and decision-making guide for testing to evaluate effectiveness at The Christie and to benefit Greater Manchester.