

PHYSIOTHERAPY TRIAGE SERVICE FOR CANCER PATIENTS: A SERVICE EVALUATION

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BACKGROUND

Cancer patients experience a plethora of symptoms from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond into survivorship. Allied Health Professionals are uniquely placed to impact upon these symptoms by engaging patients in rehabilitation. Scoping of rehabilitation services amongst adult cancer patients undergoing haematological and oncological treatment highlighted various issues with fatigue, loss of function, pain and breathlessness. A pilot programme was implemented to address these unmet needs.



METHOD

Adult patients attending outpatient oncology & haematology services were referred by healthcare professionals into the Therapy Treatment Support Service (TTSS).

Physiotherapy-led telephone triage assessment for fatigue management, musculoskeletal issues, exercise programmes and breathlessness advice. Patients were either treated by the TTSS service or referred to other relevant therapy services.

The Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy – General (FACT-G) was used as an outcome measure on initial and final patient contact.

RESULTS

Between March 2017 and March 2018 220 patients were referred to TTSS.
96 Male : 124 Female; age range - 16 to 89

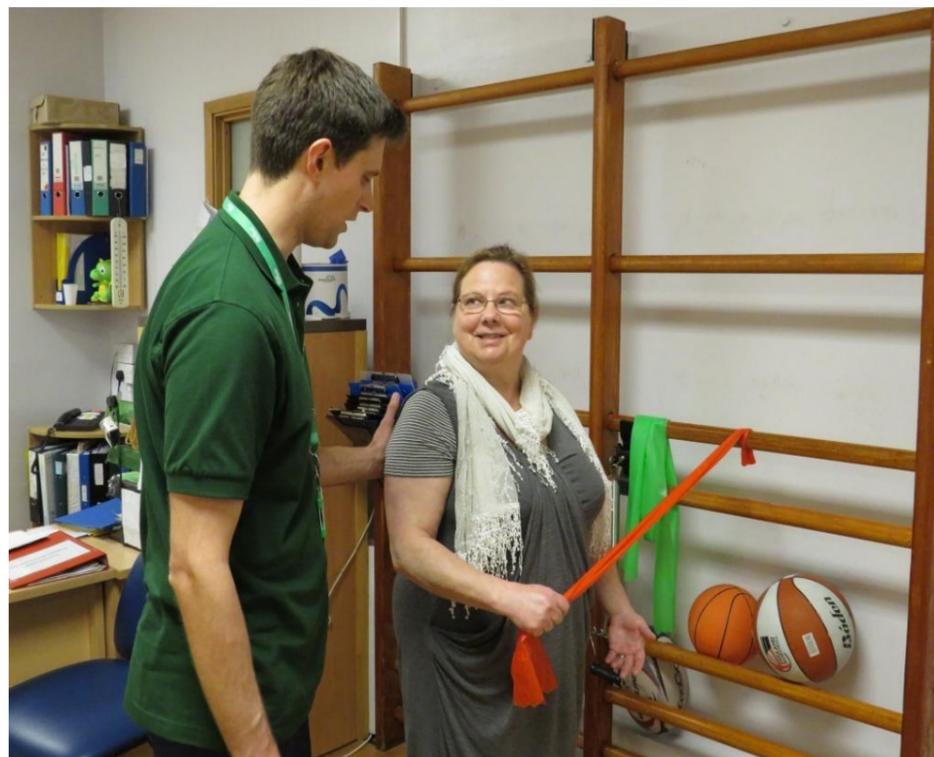
Referral numbers:

- 81 for fatigue
- 71 for musculoskeletal issues
- 42 for physical activity issues
- 20 for mobility issues
- 6 for breathlessness.

47 of 66 completed datasets. Positive quality of life outcomes demonstrated

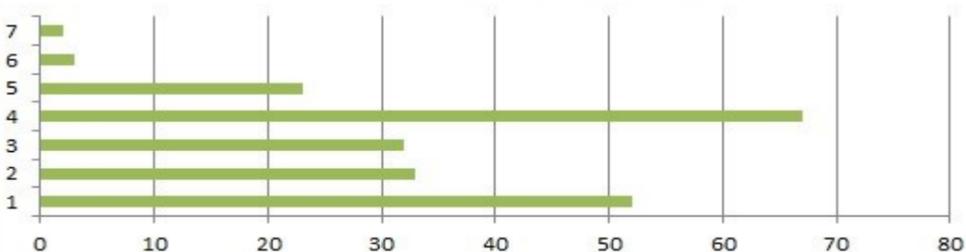
No. of contacts = 629, mode average = 4 interventions, range 1 to 7

Average time per intervention = 56 minutes



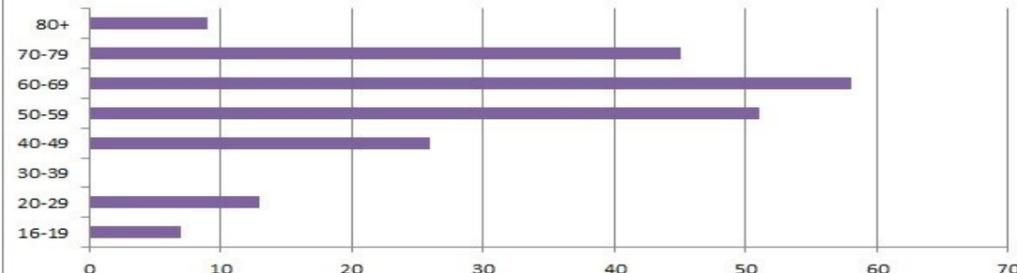
INTERVENTIONS

TTSS contacts



YEARS

TTSS age range



This was a really empowering experience for someone who felt nervous about their physical abilities and body image, thank you for support

Thank you so much for all the advice you have given, I don't feel like I am waiting around to die any more, I feel like I can live well.

CONCLUSION

Fatigue is the primary reason for referral to TTSS and its interventions have shown a positive impact upon quality of life. With fatigue recognised as the symptom that most impacts upon quality of life, an intervention such as TTSS could have a beneficial effect for individuals living with and beyond cancer enabling return to work for a significant number of working age adults. A more detailed enquiry is required to investigate this service model.