

Evaluation of Pain Assessment at the Oncology Division

The Problem: Providing adequate pain assessment and management is of major importance when caring for patients with cancer.

Aim/Goal: To evaluate the quality of pain assessment and pain documentation in the Oncology ward and the Oncology outpatient clinic.

The Team: Rober I. Cohen, MD, Anesthesia; Lowell Schnipper, MD, Oncology, Chief; Naama Neeman, MSc, Medicine, QI Specialist; Joanne Schulze, Medicine, QI Project Coordinator ; Duccio Urbinati, Medicine, Research Fellow; Nadine Farag, Medicine, Program Coordinator; Mark D. Aronson, MD, Medicine, Vice Chair for Quality

The Interventions: During the months of August – November 2007, we have conducted a project aimed at evaluating the quality of pain assessment and pain documentation at the Oncology ward and outpatient clinic. This project consists of 3 evaluation tools: 1) Interviewing patients (inpatients and outpatients) to assess their satisfaction with how their pain was managed; 2) Evaluating documentation of pain in the electronic discharge notes (inpatients) and progress notes (outpatients) and 3) Reviewing the inpatient (paper) chart for pain score.

Results and Lessons Learned

We found that patients are satisfied with their pain management care. 72% of patients who participated in the survey reported that they felt “totally” or “quite a lot” in control of their pain management, and 91% of the patients reported that they are either “somewhat satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their pain management. However, we also found that there is room for improvement in terms of pain documentation [Documentation score was calculated on a scale of 0 to 5, one point was assigned if any of the following was documented: 1) pain intensity; 2) character of pain; 3) pain location; 4) pain timing; and 5) documentation of at least 1 of the following 4 measures: patterns of radiation, aggravating or alleviating factors, allodynia, and neuropathic pain].

