

Abstract Form

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Title of abstract: Strengthening Multidisciplinary Team Performance in Cancer Services in WSLHD; Three Years' Experience

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Background:

While multidisciplinary team meetings (MDMs) are well-established in many institutions, there is wide variation in how they function and in their role in decision-making. This study adopts an innovative methodology to assess multidisciplinary team (MDT) performance and engage teams in performance improvement strategies.

Aims:

The aim of this study was to develop a validated and user friendly means of measuring MDT performance and, through benchmarking, to monitor and improve performance over time.

Method:

The study protocol comprises an online survey instrument to evaluate MDM members' perceptions of their team's performance before the implementation of the program and annually thereafter; and a tumour program maturity matrix designed as a self-assessment tool showing five levels of maturity across 20 domains. Survey data were summarized using descriptive statistics and tested for differences in the proportion of positive responses adjusted for team clustering.

Results:

The 2017 and 2018 survey have been completed and the 2019 survey is nearing completion. The number of responses collected from 12 MDTs in 2017, 2018 and 2019 was 129, 118 and 137 respectively. Comparison of results from 2017 and 2018 showed significant increase (at 0.001 level) in percentages of positive responses to questions about Terms of Reference (16% to 46%) and referral criteria (26% to 53%). Preliminary analysis of longitudinal data across 3 years also demonstrated overall improvement in 26 of 30 (87%) areas being measured.

Team performance levels from the matrix were generally consistent with the survey results, but a more sophisticated delivery mechanism was required. The matrix will be repeated when the team has designed a digitised version.

Implications:

This study describes a means of improving performance from an organisational perspective. It targets all tumour streams and provides a framework by which MDTs can determine areas for improvement, while allowing considerable flexibility in the activities each team chooses to address.

The MDM survey and maturity matrix provide an excellent means not only for teams to identify their strengths and weaknesses but also for management to review its performance against standardised criteria and to identify priority areas for improvement and further support.