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Telemedicine: Bringing cancer care for patients closer to home

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An innovative model of care through provision of telemedicine clinics in medical oncology in South Australia has been introduced to improve the burden of the tyranny of distance. This system has been utilized in South Australia (SA) to deliver oncological care to rural areas for 5 years. A retrospective clinical review was performed in 2013-2017 with 999 patients seen in SA, 2 regional and 7 rural hospitals. Telemedicine included pre-therapy reviews 781, restaging 203 and 15 new consultations. Our model allowed more satisfaction to health workers and patients, accepting this as consultation option. Benefits of this innovative model of care are saving patient's travel, decreasing the burden on metropolitan clinic appointments and improving hospital budgets. Also, to improve attendance rates and duration of therapy response by enabling patients to have cared near their home. Relative improved decision making/outcomes during consultations, especially in indigenous and patients with cultural and linguistic challenges. The challenges are phone interpreting service, patients with disabilities, having a nurse on the patient's end of the consultation, and setting up new rural centers as part of this service provision. There are many similarities including the issues of distance to cancer care, centralized in metropolitan hospitals and overburdened clinics in many countries around the world including that of Asia. Most countries now have a metropolitan-centric model of specialist cancer care, but they also have basic IT systems in regional and rural health facilities that can be adapted to suit a global development of telemedicine provision of care.

Biography

Dagmara Magdalena Poprawski has graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1992. She has completed her Master's degree in Clinical Tropical Medicine in 1998 from Mahidol University in Thailand. She has then returned to Adelaide to undertake Physician Training and Specialized in Medical Oncology. Since 2013, she had been working in regional South Australia and is currently the Acting Clinical Director of Country Health Services in SA. She has completed her Diploma in Geriatric Oncology in 2016 and is a Member of SIOG.

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