

Gateway-C

Project

The development of an online learning platform to support primary care professionals in decision making about referral for cancer

Outline

Gateway-C uses interactive films and other educational materials to support GPs in identifying patients with potential cancer symptoms and in ensuring the efficient referral of patients for diagnostic screening. You can find Gateway-C here: <http://www.gatewayc.org.uk>

Nationally, 24 per cent of patients referred via general practice visit their GPs three or more times before referral. In Greater Manchester, where the project was developed, almost 28 per cent of those patients with cancer are diagnosed in A&E departments, meaning a high proportion have advanced disease when diagnosed. Greater Manchester has the second highest level of cancers diagnosed at a late stage in England, and nearly half of all lung cancer patients are diagnosed at stage IV.

Gateway-C is designed to support GPs in encouraging patients to disclose symptoms, pick up on cues about possible difficulties, know which symptoms are important and become more confident in making decisions about referrals. Courses developed by The Christie School of Oncology, with expert GP input, feature interactive films based on real-life consultations. Interviews with expert clinical staff enhance the learning around these films. With the support of partners Cancer Research UK and the Strategic Clinical Network, Gateway-C aims to be the pre-eminent educational resource of its kind.

A pilot study to assess the effectiveness and impact of Gateway-C showed that GPs rated the learning zone as excellent, with over 90 per cent feeling they have referred back to learning during consultations, and almost 95 per cent feeling it helped them with referrals.

Primary care staff in Greater Manchester and Eastern Cheshire can access the RCGP-accredited and CRUK-endorsed learning zone with courses that support the early diagnosis of lung, colorectal and pancreatic cancer. Most recently, courses have been released to support GPs caring for patients with long-term complications of colorectal cancer and at the end of life with lung cancer. Courses focusing on further cancer pathways will be added in due course.

The aim is to enrol at least one primary care professional from around 300 of approximately 500 surgeries in the city region by the autumn. The rollout process is well placed to achieve that target.

GPs in Camden and Islington, in London, have trialled courses with support from Vanguard partners at UCLH Cancer Collaborative. This work is being evaluated to assess how it can be rolled out to more primary care staff across London. The Christie School of Oncology welcomes discussions with Cancer Alliances and other potential industry partners to support the sustainability of Gateway-C.

Contact

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