

A Multidisciplinary Preoperative Session for patients awaiting major head and neck surgery: A Quality Improvement Initiative

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Background:

Many patients undergoing head and neck cancer surgery have poor nutritional status, psycho-social issues, and complex information needs. They are subject to multiple appointments with numerous healthcare professionals in preparation for their surgery. A pilot project of a multidisciplinary pre-treatment clinic for head and neck cancer patients requiring major surgery was implemented in SIVUH. The aim of this clinic was to optimise patients by commencing prehabilitation before surgery, offer in depth education and thus more informed patient decision making, and reducing levels of preoperative anxiety. The sessions were completed by; Nursing, SLT, Dietetics, Social work, Physiotherapy and OT.

Methods:

Data was collected via patient questionnaires. Qualitative analysis was completed in the form of thematic analysis.

Results:

A total of 52 patients attended the multidisciplinary pre treatment clinic between June 2021 2021 and December 2022. Results demonstrated self-reported levels of anxiety decreased, whereas levels of knowledge increased. Many participants found the session to be helpful and would recommend it to other patients awaiting surgery.

Conclusion:

Patients awaiting surgery for head and neck cancer are better supported through a dedicated multidisciplinary session by commencing prehabilitation, decreasing anxiety and improving knowledge related to functional outcomes post operatively.