Feeding Tube Referrals Among Head, Neck and Esophageal Cancer Patients at Multicare Regional Cancer Center (MRCC)

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Introduction & Background

- Malnutrition is an issue among head, neck, and esophageal cancer patients and may be minimized with prophylactic feeding tube (FT) placement
- Patients at MRCC with anticipated FT are expected to see a MRCC RDN prior to placement
- A visit with MRCC RDN is initiated by MD or RN Navigator referral
- MRCC RDNs coordinate care with home infusion RDNs
- We completed a study to analyze adherence to this non-standardized referral process

Methods

- Retrospective analysis of EMR (September 2015-February 2016)
- Head, neck, and esophageal cancer patients from Tacoma General and Auburn clinics

Results & Discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Patients</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total MD Referrals to MRCC RDN</td>
<td>9 (30%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total TF Placements</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact w/ MRCC RDN prior to Placement</td>
<td>17 (65%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergent Placement of FT</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with Home Infusion RDN prior to or immediately following TF placement</td>
<td>16 (62%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complications</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with MRCC RDN prior to placement</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Study indicates:
  - MD referrals to MRCC RDNs are limited
  - Despite referral status, majority of FT patients see an RDN
  - A variety of clinicians send patients to RDNs
  - Potential complications may arise when no FT education is provided

Figure 2: Proposed Referral Procedure

Proposed Implementation

Implementation of a standardized referral process has the potential to reduce FT-related complications and improve patient satisfaction

- Within EMR, create an order set
  - Links Oncology-related FT orders to nutrition referrals
  - FT order automatically populates the option to place MRCC RDN and Home Infusion RDN referrals

- Currently providers must place individual (unconnected) referral orders
  - Requires more time
  - Requires MD to remember which providers should be consulted for which orders

- Order sets related to FT placement
  - Streamline when nutrition referrals occur
  - Relegate nutrition consultation-ordering to one provider (MD)
  - Reduce the risk of FT-related complications

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