Understanding Palliative Care & Its Role In Cancer Therapy

Sachin Kale, MD
Assistant Professor

The James

Creating a cancer-free world. One person, one discovery at a time.
Speaker: Sachin Kale, MD

- Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Palliative Medicine
- Medical Director for Ambulatory Palliative Care at The James Cancer Hospital
- Twitter: @sachinkalemd
Goals

- Introduce Palliative Care and its role as part of an integrated approach to cancer treatment
- Review the benefits of Palliative care
- Review what a typical Palliative visit may look like
What is Palliative Care?

- Specialized medical care focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of serious illness
- Goal is to improve quality of life for patient and family
- Care provided by a specialty-trained, multidisciplinary team
Who Can Benefit from Palliative Care?

- For patients with cancer, PC is available for anyone who needs an extra layer of support
  - Helping to treat the pain, symptoms, and stress of cancer
- It is given alongside curative treatment
  - We work closely with the rest of your Oncology team
Palliative Care is Provided by an Interdisciplinary Team

- The Palliative Team
  - Physicians
  - Advanced Practice Nurses
  - Registered Nurses
  - Pharmacists
  - Chaplains
  - Social works
  - Psychologists

- Also provided at The James and working closely with PC:
  - Interventional Pain Specialists
  - Music and Massage Therapists
  - Support groups
What Services are Provided?

- Expert management of complex physical and emotional symptoms
  - Pain, depression, anxiety, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping
- Skilled communication about what to expect in the future, in order to ensure that care is matched to the goals and priorities of the patient and family
- Care coordination
Palliative Care at The James

- We have a large inpatient and outpatient PC program
  - Interdisciplinary team of Physicians, Nurse-Practitioners, Nurses, Chaplain, Social work, Pharmacists

- Ambulatory site:
  - Over 600 new patients seen each year
  - Located in the same building as GI-Oncology
Benefits of PC

- PC has shown statistically and clinically significant improvements in:
  - Quality of Life
  - Symptom burden
  - Improved advanced care planning
  - Patient and caregiver satisfaction
Barriers to Receiving Palliative Care

- According to a 2011 Survey:
  - 70% of respondents were “not knowledgeable” about P.C.
    - Once informed, they wanted access to PC if they ever needed it
- The term “Palliative” can be used in different contexts during cancer treatment
  - For example “palliative chemotherapy” or “palliative radiation”
  - This is not the same as Palliative care, and both can be given at the same time
- Some have misconception that Palliative Care is the same as hospice

www.capc.org
Hospice

- Hospice is comfort-focused care for patients with terminal illness
  - Life expectancy of about 6 months or less
- Provided by an expert team
- Medicare benefit
  - Covers care, medications, supplies for comfort
- Can be provided at home, in a nursing home, or inpatient facility
Palliative and Hospice Along the Cancer Trajectory

Disease-Directed Therapies

Cure/Remission

Palliative Care

HOSPICE

~ 6 mo

Diagnosis

Time

Death & Bereavement

The James
What to Expect at a PC Visit at The James

- You would be referred to our clinic by a member of your Oncology team
- At the PC clinic, you will meet one of our Palliative RNs, who would conduct a comprehensive symptom assessment
  - Pain
  - Tiredness
  - Nausea
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Drowsiness
  - Appetite
  - Wellbeing
  - Shortness of breath
  - Other
What to Expect at a PC Visit at The James

- You will next meet with a specialty trained Physician or Advanced Practice Nurse
  - We will review your symptoms and any other questions you have
- As we get to know each other, we will also listen to your values, hopes, and worries as it relates to your medical care
- We will help you develop an Advanced Care Plan that fits your values and needs
  - Living Will
  - Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare
- We will also help coordinate care and stay in close contact with the rest of your Oncology team
Palliative Care is a specialized medical care for patients with serious illnesses, such as cancer.

Palliative Care is based on need—it is appropriate at any age and any stage of illness.

The goal of Palliative Care is to improve Quality of Life.

The James Cancer Center has a robust Palliative Care team that provides interdisciplinary care in the hospital and clinic setting.
Thank you!

- Feel free to follow me on twitter @sachinkalemd