Background
The Objectives of AnCan
Patient support groups provide substantial help and information to cancer patients. However, traditional, in-person support groups provide access only to patients in large metropolitan areas who are physically mobile. In addition, such groups are often comprised of patients with different diseases or stages of illness, limiting their effectiveness.

In response to this need, the AnCan Foundation innovated virtual peer-led support groups. Telephone conferences in 2010 led to video chat meetings by 2015. Over time, AnCan has developed best practices for moderating its groups. The AnCan model has many advantages:

- Geographical – participants can join from anywhere, even locations with no local group
- Virtual access – Participants who are homebound or physically disabled or from remote locations can access meetings

AnCan was founded on prostate cancer advocacy, and 50% of its current programming focuses on prostate cancer. Over time, AnCan has expanded to 10 conditions, including additional cancers (e.g., blood cancers) and other serious illnesses. More than 20 free, drop-in meetings are now offered per month. In addition, AnCan offers one-on-one navigation, webinars featuring leading experts, and national advocacy.

We present the results of a survey of AnCan attendees that strongly support the value of AnCan in their treatment and quality of life.

1. AnCan video sessions are free and open

AnCan BEST PRACTICES include:

- Groups are peer-led by individuals who are affected by the disease being discussed. Health professionals are a voice only if they share the condition.
- Each participant is polled by name to see if they need time in the meeting – this gives a better response than a question posed to all.
- New participants are offered priority at the start of each meeting – they know they are welcomed and need.
- AnCan separates educational presentations from support meetings.

2. Participants primarily live in North America, and experience a full range of disease states

AnCan participants join meetings across the US and Canada, as well as from Australia, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Taiwan and Thailand.

3. Men find information at meetings to be useful and most use it to inform treatment choices

Survey Methods

A well-structured questionnaire was sent to people who had attended or expressed interest in an AnCan meeting and had provided their e-mail address. The results presented are based on the 236 responses received from a general survey and 105 from a second directed at those on Active Surveillance.

4. Participants have improved lifestyle habits

Patient knowledge, positively impacts treatment planning, and boosts confidence in navigating the disease experience.

5. Some participants changed lead physicians since attending AnCan

AnCan virtual peer groups:

- Provide patients with peer support independent of geographic location and mobility status.
- Increase patient knowledge, positively impacts treatment planning, and boosts confidence in navigating the disease experience.
- Optimize physician/patient interactions and improve outcomes.
- Promote lifestyle improvements, provides support to reduce stress, and improves QoL.
- Empower patients to self-advocate and improve their disease experience.

Summary

Conclusions

Disclosures:
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"The AnCan group has provided me with the resources and knowledge I needed to determine the treatment options that are right for me."