Evaluating The Contribution of Virtual Peer-Led Support to Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Care: The AnCan Experience

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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 disease, limiting their effectiveness.

In response to this need, the AnCan Foundation innovated virtual chat, peer-led support groups. Telephone conferences in 2015 led to video chat meetings by 2016. 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
- Equal-access – Participants who are immunocompromised or with physical disabilities or social anxiety can more-easily participate
- Disease specificity – lack of geographical/limitations creates a wider pool of individuals, enabling groups for less-common and advanced-stage diseases

AnCan was founded on prostate cancer advocacy, and 50% of its current programs 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 live, drop-in meetings are now offered per month. In addition, AnCan offers one-on-one navigation, webinars featuring leading experts, and national advocacy to amplify the patient voice.

We present the results of a survey of attendees that strongly support the value one-on-one navigation, webinars featuring leading experts, and national advocacy to help patients.

Survey Methods

A web-based questionnaire was sent to people who had attended or expressed interest in an ANACAN meeting and had provided their email address. The respondents are based on the 236 responses received from a general survey and 165 from a second directed at those on Active Surveillance.

The Objectives of AnCan

- 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
- 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

Conclusions

We advocate that virtual peer group attendance, based on our model, be included in ASCO treatment recommendations, especially for advanced disease.

Disclosures:
AnCan has received or is applying for sponsorships from Bayer, Foundation Medicine, Janssen, Myovant-Pfizer, and Pfizer.

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“AnCan group has provided me with the resources and knowledge I needed to determine the treatment options that are right for me.”

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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 have 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 return!
- AnCan separates educational presentations from support meetings
- Extensive use of the Chat Window allows URL links and other information to be shared
- With participant knowledge, some groups are recorded and posted on our YouTube Channel. Views frequently exceed group attendance.

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

Figurative Distribution of North American Participants

- Localized
- Locally Advanced
- Regionally Metastatic
- Advanced
- Not-yet-diagnosed
- Advanced
- Locally Advanced
- Regionally Metastatic
- Advanced
- Not-yet-diagnosed

Percent “Yes” Response

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

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

3. Participants have improved lifestyle habits

4. AnCan Active Surveillance support groups enable participants to focus on their unique needs

More than two-thirds would recommend AS-only support group

Summarize

AnCan peer virtual 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
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40% learned new tools, 47% said participation helped stay on AS, 33% learned to seek second opinions, 23% brought AS to their urologist

In what ways has participating in AnCan AS helped you?

Would you recommend AS-only support group?