

# Holistic needs assessment. Evaluation of cancer distress management in Scotland

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## Summary

The aim of the study is to assess the clinical impact of holistic needs assessment (HNA) on quality of life, self management and shared decision making in cancer care. Specifically the study will look at the impact of HNA on clinician consultation style and the patient consultation involvement. A number of other potential impacts will be measured, such as patient satisfaction with consultation, confidence, and navigation of support services. It will also measure congruence between patient satisfaction and clinician impression of patient satisfaction. This measure can then be used to ascertain the impact of congruence on the other measures.

## Background

The HNA is a structured method of consultation. It is completed by the patient immediately prior to consultation. The clinician uses this to guide the consultation. The idea is that by using this measure the consultation is thus focused on the most important needs of the patient, as defined by them. This longitudinal controlled study will audiotape clinical consultations in order to objectively measure the type of conversation (dialogue, dyad or monologue), and the degree to which each participant instigates conversation within it. These analyses produce two generalisable measures of consultation participation: the dialogue ratio (DR) and the preponderance of initiative (PI). These variables can then be compared with outcome measures of self efficacy, satisfaction with consultation and quality of life to ascertain whether consultation participation is associated with any of them. Whether those patients and clinicians using HNA to structure their consultations will exhibit more and better examples of participation than those that do not, will be examined. In addition self efficacy, satisfaction with consultation, clinician impression of patient satisfaction, and quality of life will also be measured. Follow up will be carried out for an additional 3 years following discharge.

Study participants will be patients and clinicians from two matched bowel cancer and two matched urological cancer clinics. Patients will be recruited six months post diagnosis and followed up every six months for eighteen months, contributing three consultations each in total. 100 patients will be recruited from each clinic, totalling 200 patients in the experimental (HNA) group, and 200 in the control (treatment as usual) group. A purposive subsample of 10 from each group will then be followed up for a period of three years in order to interview them about their capacity to self manage and navigate support systems in the longer term.

Why is this work important.

Macmillan recommends that a holistic needs assessment is completed for all cancer patients. Research has shown that this is beneficial to help co-ordinate care and ensure that all of the needs of the patient have been discussed and supported where possible. However a holistic assessment can also highlight areas for discussion which the patient had not considered and also offer information and additional support which they may not have been aware of. The HNA has the potential to help clinicians become more patient focussed and to promote greater equality in the patient-clinical consultation. This study explores whether this is the case and will provide valuable information to support the development and promotion of holistic needs assessments both for the clinician and the patient. It is also unique in providing a longitudinal view of how patients cope over an extended period.

The study will report in 2016