

CoCanCPG. Coordination of cancer clinical practice in Europe

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ABSTRACT

All European countries are facing common challenges for delivering appropriate, evidence-based care to patients with cancer. Despite tangible improvements in diagnosis and treatment, marked differences in cancer survival exist throughout Europe. The reliable translation of new research evidence into consistent patient-oriented strategies is a key endeavour to overcome inequalities in healthcare. Clinical-practice guidelines are important tools for improving quality of care by informing professionals and patients about the most appropriate clinical practice. Guideline programmes in different countries use similar strategies to achieve similar goals. This results in unnecessary duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources. While different initiatives at the international level have attempted to improve the quality of guidelines, less investment has been made to overcome existing fragmentation and duplication of effort in cancer guideline development and research. To provide added value to existing initiatives and foster equitable access to evidence-based cancer care in Europe, CoCanCPG will establish cooperation between cancer guideline programmes. CoCanCPG is an ERA-Net coordinated by the French National Cancer Institute with 17 partners from 11 countries. The CoCanCPG partners will achieve their goal through an ambitious, step-wise approach with a long-term perspective, involving: 1. implementing a common framework for sharing knowledge and skills; 2. developing shared activities for guideline development; 3. assembling a critical mass for pertinent research into guideline methods; 4. implementing an appropriate framework for cooperation. Successful development of joint activities involves learning how to adopt common quality standards and how to share responsibilities, while taking into account the cultural and organisational diversity of the participating organisations. Language barriers and different organisational settings add a level of complexity to setting up transnational collaboration. Through its activities, CoCanCPG will make an important contribution towards better access to evidence-based cancer practices and thus contribute to reducing inequalities and improving care for patients with cancer across Europe.

Key words: practice guidelines, evidence-based medicine, international cooperation, cultural diversity.

Acknowledgments: CoCanCPG has received research funding from the Community's Sixth Framework Programme (contract No. 026070). This paper reflects only the authors' view and the Community is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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