

Supporting cancer survivors with psychosocial, selfmanagement, and lifestyle problems using an online tailored intervention

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Supporting cancer survivors with psychosocial, self-management, and lifestyle problems using an online tailored intervention

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Abstract

Since cancer survivors experience psychosocial, physical, self-management, and lifestyle problems after their treatment, an online tailored intervention, the 'Kanker Nazorg Wijzer' (Cancer Aftercare Guide; KNW), will be developed. The KNW aims to improve quality of life of cancer survivors by supporting them with coping with their experienced problems.

Introduction

Cancer is a life-threatening disease which causes psychosocial and physical problems that may continue after the primary treatment is finished successfully (1). In the Netherlands, 95,000 new cases of cancer occur each year and it is expected that this number will rise to 123,000 yearly cases in 2020. Since the 5 year survival rate continues to increase, it is expected that in 2020 around 660,000 people will have been diagnosed with cancer in the previous 10 years and will be living with the aftermath (2). Most prominent problems that cancer survivors experience encompass fatigue, pain, fear of recurrence, social/relational problems, and difficulties with returning to work (3 - 5). Additionally, several problems regarding life-style behaviours (smoking, alcohol intake, dietary risk factors, and physical inactivity) have been reported (6). The current aftercare available does not sufficiently meet cancer survivors needs (7). Therefore the KNW will be developed. The KNW is an online tailored intervention, aimed at supporting cancer survivors with coping with psychosocial, physical, and self-management problems, and to advice them on lifestyle behaviour.

Methods

A RCT with follow-up measurements at 3, 6 and 12 months will be conducted by comparing an intervention group with a waiting list control group (Table 1). In total, 500 adult cancer survivors (250 per condition) will participate in the study. Cancer survivors will be recruited by oncology personnel in 16 hospitals. The questionnaire will assess socio-demographics, QoL, psychological distress, information needs, coping and self-management skills, experienced social support, lifestyle behaviours (smoking, alcohol intake, diet, and physical activity), and related determinants of these concepts.

T0	T1	Intervention	T2	T3	T4			
Randomisation	Baseline		3 months	6 months	12 months			
Exp. Group	Q1	XXX	Q2	XXX	Q3	XXX	Q4	
Control Group	Q1	-	Q2	-	Q3	-	Q4	XXX

Table 1. The outline of the study design. T = Time point; Q = Questionnaire; XXX = access to the intervention; Exp. = Experimental.

Results

Current stage of work: literature study and focus group interviews have been conducted to explore the most prominent psychosocial, physical, self-management, and lifestyle problems of cancer survivors (5). At the moment, survey research is being conducted to verify these findings. Furthermore, the KNW intervention is in the developmental phase.

Conclusion

The development of the KNW intervention must lead to a theory- and evidence-based tailored intervention aimed at improving QoL of cancer survivor by assisting them in self-care. Additionally, the study results will demonstrate which people benefit most from the KNW.

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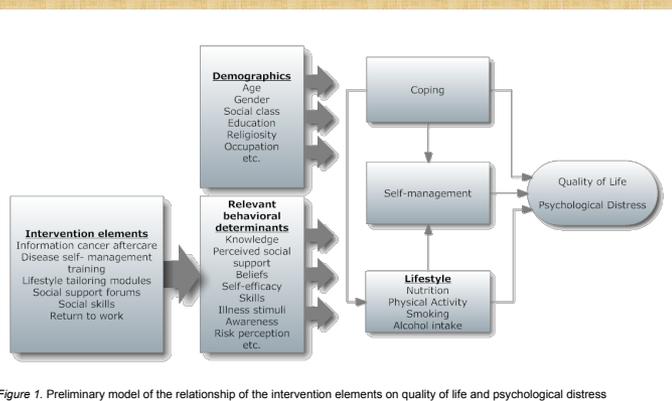


Figure 1. Preliminary model of the relationship of the intervention elements on quality of life and psychological distress

Objectives

To test the short term (3-6 months) and long term (12 months) effectiveness of the KNW: do the health related effects generated by the KNW reduce levels of psychological distress and improve the overall quality of life? (Figure 1)

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