

Effectiveness of a Novel Cross-Sector In-Hospital Service for Parents who are Cancer Patients and their Adolescent and Young Adult Children

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BACKGROUND

Parental cancer poses psychosocial challenges for parents and their adolescent and young adult (AYA) children⁽¹⁾, with concerns including confidence in parenting ability and communication about cancer with their AYA children^(2,3). To address this, a novel cross-sector service (Parent Support Worker; PSW) supporting parent-patients, their partners, and AYA children was implemented and evaluated in three Australian hospitals.

AIMS

- ◆ To evaluate the effectiveness of the PSW service in improving parenting and psychosocial outcomes in parents with cancer
- ◆ To explore parent satisfaction with the service
- ◆ To explore the impact of the service on families



METHODS

Parents' psychological distress (K10), parenting concerns (PV9 and PCQ), and parents' cancer self-efficacy in helping their children (CASE Help Child sub-scale) were assessed pre- and post-service (N=36). Satisfaction with the PSW service was explored with a separate sample of 43 service users, and via semi-structured interviews: the latter also exploring the impact of the service.

RESULTS

The service was evaluated in 1 Victorian and 2 NSW hospitals with cancer patients and their partners.



	Pre & Post Session Surveys	Satisfaction Surveys
N	36	43
Female	92%	61%
Age	(range 30-56 years; 44% aged 36-45 years)	(range 26-65 years; 49% aged 46-55 years)
Number of Children	2 children (56%; range 1-4)	2 children (54%; range 1-5)
Cancer Patients	100%	59%
Number of Sessions with PSW	Mean= 1.5; range 1-4	Mean= 2.6; range 1-10

IMPACT OF THE SERVICE ON FAMILIES

13 parents who completed surveys were interviewed.

Key themes from the interviews were:

“ THE SERVICE IMPROVED PARENTS' CONFIDENCE IN COMMUNICATING WITH AND SUPPORTING THEIR CHILDREN THROUGH CANCER

“I didn't want to tell them too soon and I didn't want to scare them, but then I also didn't want to withhold information from them. So that's where [PSW] came into helping me decide what was the appropriate amount of information for all of them.” - P4

“ THE SERVICE HELPED PARENTS TO COPE WITH THEIR EMOTIONS AND PROVIDED RE-ASSURANCE

“[PSW] just helped me to see a bit more realistic view of what was going to happen and how things were going to progress. And so I was able to be a little bit calmer about it all, not quite so anxious about it all.” - P4

“ PSWS HELPED PARENTS TO ACCESS OTHER SERVICES

“It [the service] gave me some resources, websites, and she also referred me to the psychologist at [hospital] for my own needs... And she also suggested some other programs at [hospital]. For example, there was music therapy they were starting up for children. She gave me resources for Canteen.” - P1

“ THE SERVICE WAS EASY TO ACCESS

“It was quite easy to make an appointment - well, we were referred [PSW] got in contact with us and then we booked it up, and it was on the same day as treatment.” - P11

“ NEED FOR FOLLOW-UP CONTACT FROM PSW

“I thought it was very good, my initial meeting. I think the only thing would be is maybe to have a follow-up later on ...“What else do you need?” or “What else can we do?” would be helpful.” - P2

REDUCTION IN PARENTAL CONCERNS

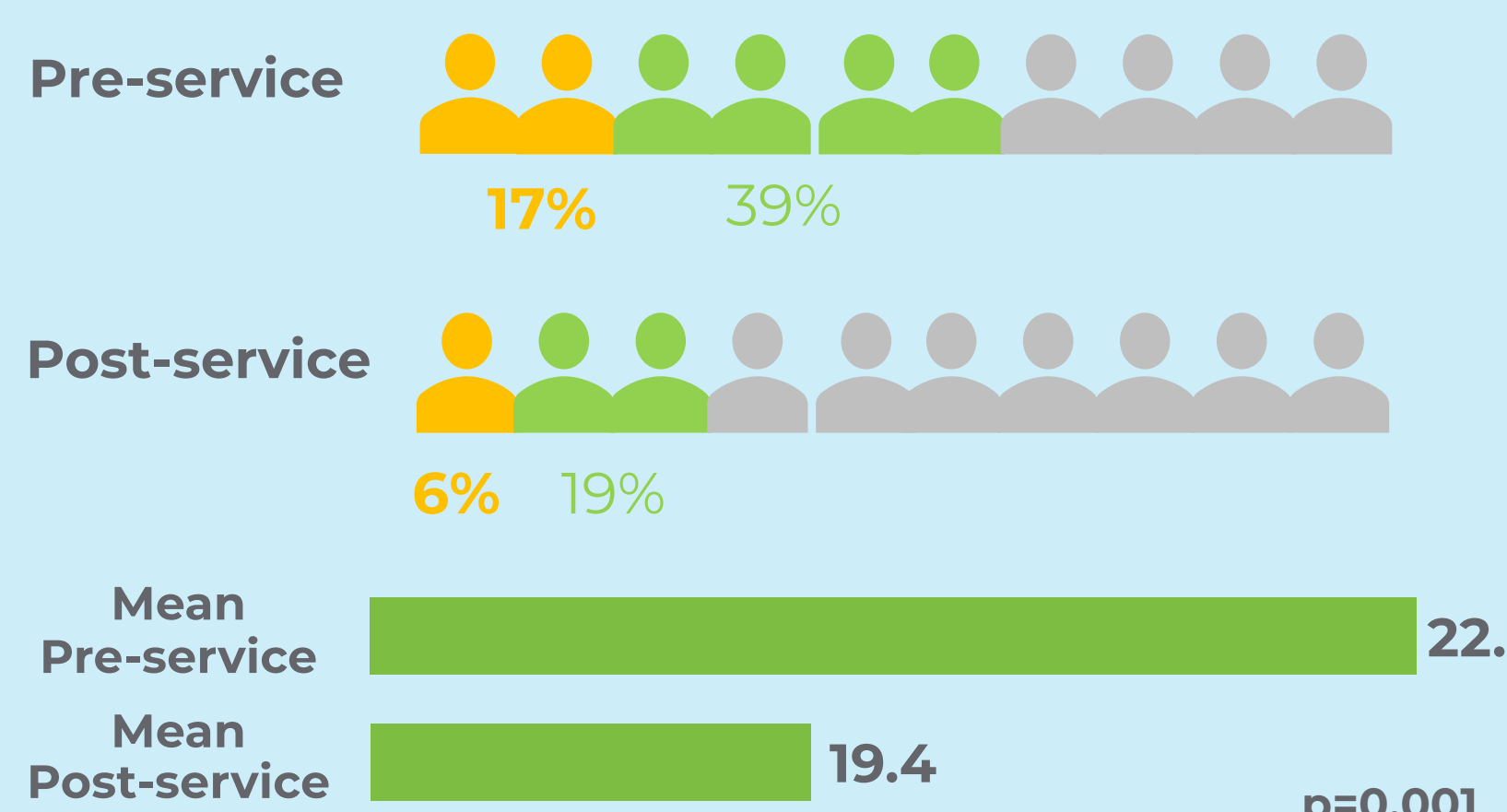
Mean Pre-service = 2.9, Post-service= 2.3; p=0.001

For each line, how concerned are you?	Not at all concerned	Very concerned
Factor 1: practical impact of illness on child		
My own mood, worries or emotions are affecting my children	1 2 3 4 5	
Factor 2: emotional impact of illness on child		
My children are emotionally upset by the illness	1 2 3 4 5	
Factor 3: concerns about co-parent (To be completed by patients only)		
My children's other parent would not be able to meet their emotional needs if I am unable to	1 2 3 4 5	

REDUCTION IN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

K10 Scores **Very High (30-50)** and **High (22-29)**

Proportion **Very High and High Distress**

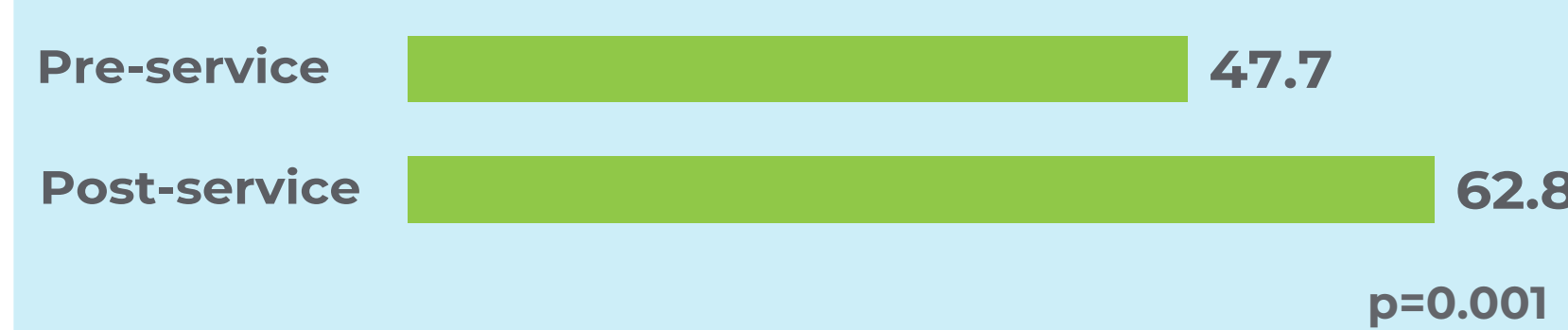


REDUCTION IN STRESS FROM THE SITUATIONS PARENTS HOPED TO IMPROVE WITH THE SERVICE

Mean Pre-service = 5.6, Post-service= 3.9; p=0.005

On average, over the last 2 weeks:	Not at all stressed/bothered	Moderately stressed/bothered	Extremely stressed/bothered
How much has it bothered or stressed you? (please circle a number)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		

INCREASE IN PARENTS' CONFIDENCE IN THEIR ABILITY TO HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH CANCER-RELATED CONCERNS



How confident are you about your cancer-related parenting?	Not at all confident	Very confident
I am able to maintain close communication with my child(ren) about the cancer	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

HIGH SATISFACTION WITH THE PSW SERVICE



CONCLUSIONS

Parents reported high levels of satisfaction and positive impact of the service. The PSW service was effective in improving psychosocial and parenting outcomes. The PSW service provides evidence for the need and clinical utility of integrated, cross-sector care to support families impacted by cancer.



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