ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATOR: PRELIMINARY EXPERIENCE OF A NOVEL PATIENT-CENTERED PROJECT IN A GENERAL SURGERY UNIT IN CENTRAL ITALY

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BACKGROUND

The role of nurse navigator (N-N) is a specialized nurse offering personalized care to oncologic patients to help them throughout the healthcare system. In our general surgery unit in Italy, we have started such project since January 2023, aiming to enhance the diagnostic-therapeutic and assistance pathway of each oncologic patients.

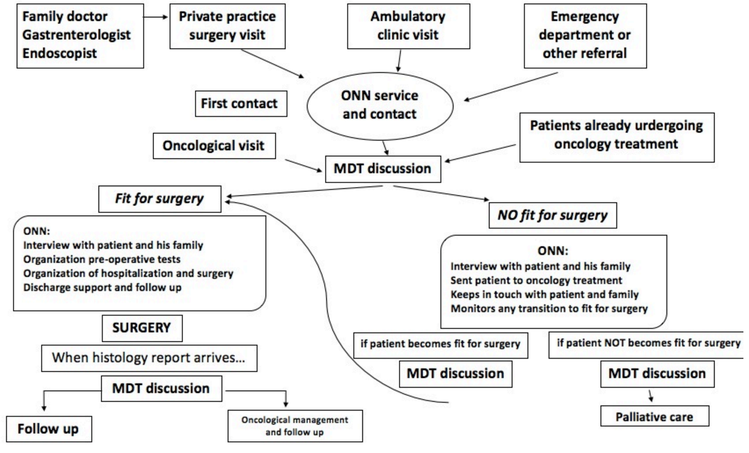
PURPOSE

1. **TIME INTERVAL between the first patient contact of our team and each phase of diagnostic and therapeutic pathway**
2. **Assessment of the number, frequency of CONTACTS between the patient and his N-N and quantity and type of PROCEDURES organized**
3. **PATIENT SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT**

STUDY GROUP	
Colon cancer	12
Rectal cancer	6
Liver cancer	6
Pancreatic cancer	6

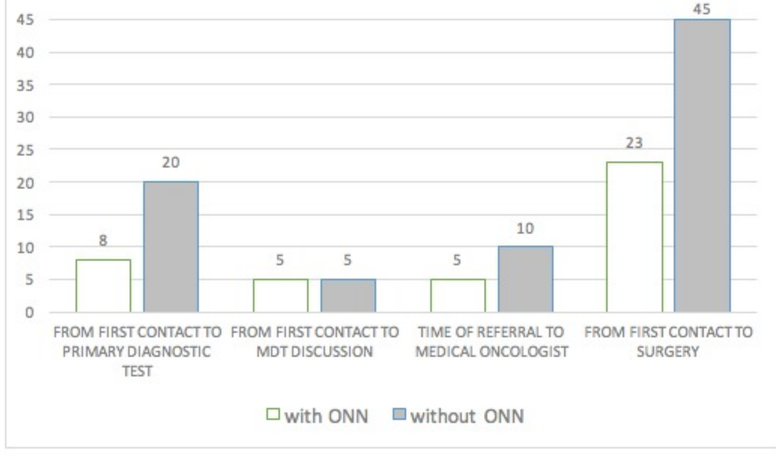
METHODS

Prospective cohort study has been conducted with a control group represented by the parameters measured in 2022 for the oncologic patients treated in our same surgical unit. The sample included 30 patients. Contacts have been recorded within a dedicated cell phone number. Patient Satisfaction With Cancer Care (PSCC) questionnaire has been and this was given to the patients in a blind way by third party to avoid biases.



RESULTS

Average time frame from first contact to the primary diagnostic test was **8 days vs 20 days in 2022 (CG).** All patients underwent MDT discussion and time to MDT **was not different** between the two groups. 5 patients were considered not fit for surgery and average time of referral to medical oncologist was **2 days in the study vs 10 days in the CG.**
25 patients were fit for upfront surgery and average time from first contact to surgery was **23 days after ONN establishment vs 45 days in the CG.** 21 patients underwent Minimally invasive procedure: 17 laparoscopic surgery, 4 endoscopic procedures
Each patient had on average **10 phone calls with ONN**. For patients led to first cancer diagnosis, ONN organized an **average of 4 test**. Questionnaire about patients' satisfaction reached a response rate of 100% with a **mean score of 85,2/90**.



CONCLUSIONS

These preliminary results showed that ONN proved to be effective and to enhance quality and outcomes of the management pathway of surgical oncology patients. Further studies are required to better the results and identify possible room for improvements within the ONN oncologic pathways.