

Enabling patients to remain at home: meeting consumer demand for cancer-specific occupational therapy services in the home

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Background

- Hospital in the Home (HITH) Cancer Services was traditionally nursing-led
- Patients receiving cancer treatment at home had **no direct access to allied health** expertise
- In 2022, Better@Home funding enabled allied health expansion:
 - part-time **occupational therapy** and physiotherapy roles
 - project grant funding obtained to support a **process evaluation***

**See ePoster:
A process evaluation of
an innovative home-
based occupational
therapy service for people
with cancer*

Aim

To proactively **engage with consumers** in the process evaluation of the allied health program in HITH Cancer Services, to **understand the service need, impact acceptability and satisfaction** from a consumer perspective.

Methodology

Survey Design

- Purpose-designed, consumer-reviewed satisfaction survey
- Online or paper format
- 12 Likert-scale statements (Strongly Disagree → Strongly Agree)
- 4 open-ended questions

Eligible Participants

- All patients receiving allied health via HITH Cancer Services
- Their caregivers
- 6-month data collection period (September 2022 - March 2023)

Analysis

- Quantitative data analysed descriptively
- Qualitative data coded using the **Proctor Model for Implementation Framework**



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Consumer Satisfaction and Perceived Impact

Survey Responses
n=22



- **100%** agreed or strongly agreed it is **important for people with cancer to have access to allied health services at home**
- **95%** reported **very high satisfaction** with allied health services provided

What Consumers Valued

Home-based visits and reduced travel

"Home visits have been a blessing at a time when it was very difficult to leave home"

Personalised treatment plans and exercise programs

"Exercises suggested for my specific case - clever, practical suggestions. Encouraging, tactful and professional."

Timely equipment prescription, trialled directly in the home

"Knowledge and education and able to trial and test equipment to support day to day home life when needed"

Coordination of community and supportive care referrals

"All staff have been so very helpful. It's their understanding of the whole situation and helping us connect with various services, all that were so assuring and appreciated!"

Key Messages

- Consumers highlighted the value of **cancer-specific expertise** and the reassurance of being supported in their own environment.
- This allied health service addressed a **previously unmet need** within HITH Cancer Services and was **overwhelmingly well received** by patients and carers.



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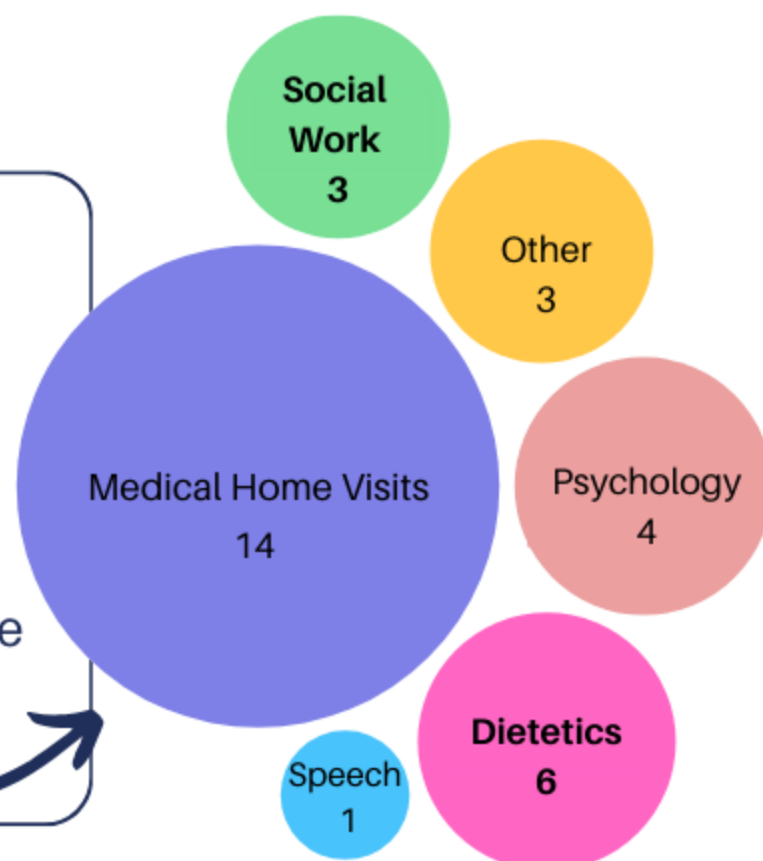
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Meeting Consumer Demand

- Cancer- and treatment-related functional focus
 - Proactive bridging of inpatient and outpatient care
 - Coordinated community and supportive care referrals
 - Support across disease trajectory, including best supportive care
 - Expanded services to enable true bed-substitution care
- 64% survey respondents identified **medical home visits** as a desirable addition



"Everyone involved were very supportive and helpful and nothing was too much trouble for staff to follow up."

"I am EXTREMELY grateful to the occupational therapist who attended our home. When she became involved to help me look after my husband at home, it made my life so much easier!"

"Home visits at the start of journey. Availability on phone for suggestions. Awareness of support being there."

"I found the OT extremely helpful in that they sourced all the things he needed to enable him to remain at home when he was really ill."

Conclusion

- This model **overcomes common eligibility barriers** through home, hospital, or telehealth delivery.
- Embedding allied health in HITH Cancer Services is **acceptable, feasible and highly valued by consumers.**
- Occupational therapy interventions **support quality, person-centred cancer care at home.**

Read the full article here!

