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Cross-Sectional Study Assessing the Feasibility of Using NET VITALS Communication Tool Among Patients With Neuroendocrine Tumors



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BACKGROUND: Effective communication between a patient and physician are important factors that influence a patient's behavior, knowledge, and well-being. Neuroendocrine tumor (NET) patients have reported struggles with obtaining accurate information regarding their diagnosis and treatment.

METHODS: NET VITALS, created by the Los Angeles Carcinoid Neuroendocrine Tumor Society (LACNETS), is an 18 item communication tool consisting of domains from diagnosis to treatment. At the 2019 Annual LACNETS Conference, patients received NET VITALS and a patient satisfaction survey. The response rate, proportion of items completed, and satisfaction responses were used as indicators of feasibility, patients' perception of their understanding of their NET diagnosis and treatment, and patient satisfaction with using NET VITALS respectively.

RESULTS: The response rate was 88% (68/77) based on returned NET VITALS. Median age of NET patients was 63 years with various primary sites including: 32 (47%) gastrointestinal, 20 (29%) pancreatic, 6 (9%) lung, 2 (3%) paraganglioma, and 8 (12%) unknown or other primary. Median proportion of completed items in NET VITALS was 83%. Difficult items patients were unable to complete include tumor Ki67 index (57%), differentiation (31%), grade (41%), and functional status (32%). Sixty-nine percent of patients did not feel sufficient information about NETs was given to them at their time of diagnosis and 54% of patients

stated having a lot of questions after meeting with their NET care providers. Regarding satisfaction, 68% felt NET VITALS provides topics that can be discussed with providers, 64% would use NET VITALS to facilitate discussion, 74% felt it's a useful communication tool, and 76% would recommend it to others.

CONCLUSION: NET VITALS is feasible and identified knowledge gaps regarding patients' understanding of their NET diagnosis. With high patient satisfaction, further research incorporating NET VITALS into NET patient care is warranted.

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