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### Evaluation of an online communication skills training program specifically targeting cultural competency in nurses and oncologists

**Background & Aim:** No Communication Skills Training (CST) resources specifically targeting cultural competency in oncology healthcare are currently available. This project aimed to develop an online interactive CST program and assess its feasibility and potential efficacy in improving perceived competence of oncology Health Professionals (HPs) in communicating with people with cancer from minority backgrounds.

**Methods:** An online CST program providing strategy exemplified in vignettes-based professionally produced videos was developed through an iterative process with input from a large multidisciplinary team. The CST program was tested with medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and oncology nurses. Participants were asked to complete self-report questionnaires at 3 time points-pre-CST program (baseline) and post-CST program, (1) 2 weeks after completion and (2) 3 months later.

**Results:** To date 54 participants completed the first two questionnaires. Preliminary analysis demonstrates that participants' evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. Ninety-eight percent (98%) found the CST program was helpful in working with patients from minority backgrounds and 84% stated that they have gained new skills in working with these patients. Ninety-one percent (91%) stated that they would recommend the program to their colleagues. Analyses of changes from baseline to the first follow up show that HPs felt more competent in communicating with patients from minority backgrounds ( $Z=-2.286$ ,  $P=0.022$ ) and they perceived the program will bring positive change in their practice and their readiness to communicate in a culturally competent manner ( $Z=-2.991$ ,  $P=0.003$ ).

**Conclusion:** The program was judged highly acceptable by HPs and initial results indicate that it may be effective in increasing perceived competence.

### Biography

Bettina Meiser is the Head of the Psychosocial Research Group, Prince of Wales Clinical School. She holds a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Senior Research Fellowship Level B as well as research grants from the NHMRC, Australian Research Council, Cancer Australia, NSW Cancer Council, Cancer Institute NSW and the APEX Foundation for Research into Intellectual Disabilities. With the input of many colleagues, she has built a nationally and internationally recognized research program that assesses the psychosocial impact of genetic counseling and testing for hereditary disease; psychological adjustment of individuals at risk for hereditary disease; and the design and evaluation of interventions in the cancer genetic counseling setting, in particular decision aids as an innovative means of patient education.

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