Young Adults’ Perceptions of the Venturing Out Pack Program as a Tangible Cancer Support Service

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Purpose/Objectives: To explore the extent to which contents contained in a backpack called the Venturing Out Pack (Vo-Pak) assist in meeting the practical, psychosocial, and informational needs of young adults (YAs), as well as how the Vo-Pak could better meet the needs of YAs.

Research Approach: Qualitative, descriptive.

Setting: A university-affiliated adult hospital cancer center in Montreal, Quebec.

Participants: 12 YAs treated for cancer.

Methodologic Approach: One-time, individual, semistructured interviews. Verbatim transcripts underwent thematic analysis.

Findings: Participants viewed the Vo-Pak as a welcoming, ready-to-use, timely package that met many cancer-related needs. The Vo-Pak contains three kits: the Hospital Comfort Kit, which was seen as a hands-on resource that provided quality products; the Venturing Out Kit, which was viewed as a catalyst for connecting with others; and the Friends of Lara Information Kit, which assisted participants in locating relevant support resources. Participants recommended earlier delivery and broader dissemination of the Vo-Pak program.

Conclusions: This program adds value to efforts to enhance cancer care for YAs. Integrating participants’ recommendations contributes to the overarching goal of comprehensive person-centered care to an underserved segment of the cancer population.

Interpretation: The Vo-Pak program could be optimized by re-engaging healthcare professionals in its broader dissemination. Champions may be added to optimize the successful implementation of tangible support programs. YAs seem eager to connect with peers. The Vo-Pak can be instrumental in facilitating these connections and enabling these exchanges.