

RESEARCH BRIEF

Conducting Intervention Research Through the Cancer Information Service: A Feasibility Study

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Purpose/Objectives: To determine the feasibility of conducting trials of educational interventions regarding pain and quality of life (QOL) with people who call the National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service (CIS).

Design: Descriptive.

Setting: North Central CIS, located at the University of Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Center in Madison.

Sample: Callers to the North Central CIS who self-identified as people diagnosed with cancer or as family members or friends of people diagnosed with cancer were eligible. 102 people with cancer and 103 significant others answered questions concerning the feasibility of a pain study, and 101 significant others completed questions about the feasibility of a QOL study.

Methods: Eligible CIS callers were invited at the end of usual service to participate in a research study. Those who agreed were asked structured questions regarding pain or QOL.

Main Research Variables: Response rate, length of time to complete recruitment, concerns about reporting pain and using analgesics, concerns about QOL, demographic variables, and willingness to join a hypothetical study.

Findings: The majority of callers had concerns about pain and QOL, and the vast majority (78%–89%) of participants indicated a willingness to join a future educational intervention study.

Conclusions: Using subjects recruited through CIS, conducting trials of brief telephone interventions designed to help patients overcome barriers to pain management or assist families in addressing QOL concerns may be feasible.

Implications for Nursing: Researchers may wish to consider the opportunities afforded by collaborating with CIS colleagues in planning and conducting studies of educational interventions.

Key Points . . .

- ▶ The vast majority of participants calling the Cancer Information Service (CIS) responded that they would be willing to participate in a telephone-delivered educational intervention for either pain management or family quality of life.
- ▶ The numbers of willing participants and the short time to collect data support the feasibility of conducting telephone-based interventions through CIS.
- ▶ The number and types of concerns regarding pain management and family quality of life reported by patients and significant others calling CIS suggest a need for nursing interventions.
- ▶ These results provide researchers with data needed to demonstrate to funding sources that conducting a study of a telephone-delivered intervention using CIS would be feasible.

munications (Thomsen & Ter Maat). The CIS Research Initiative provides an avenue for subject recruitment to cancer control researchers. CIS has been involved in studies conducted by the CIS Research Consortium that have been completed successfully, with large numbers of participants recruited in short periods of time (Marcus, 1998; Marcus et al., 1998). These studies involved issues such as fruit and vegetable consumption as cancer prevention. Whether similarly

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As the United States' foremost source for cancer information (Thomsen & Ter Maat, 1998), the National Cancer Institute's (NCI's) Cancer Information Service (CIS) communicates the latest research findings on cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and supportive care to patients, the public, and healthcare professionals. CIS has three ways of providing this information. The first is through a toll-free telephone number (800-4-CANCER) and the Internet using instant messaging technology. The second is a partnership program that collaborates with organizations to provide cancer information to minority and underserved audiences. The third is a Research Initiative in Cancer Com-