CARE PROJECTS 2012

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University of Calgary CARE Project

Cervical Cancer Awareness and Screening

For our CARE project this year we focused our efforts on cervical cancer awareness and screening. This was all highlighted during Cervical Cancer Awareness Week. We felt it was a very successful event and also a very good learning opportunity for residents.

There were four major components to our project this year. The first component consisted of an information booth, which was set up at two of the GoodLife Fitness gyms in Calgary. Residents were available to provide information about cervical cancer and HPV, as well as encourage and highlight the importance of screening. We also distributed small giveaway bags with pamphlets and the contact information for local Pap clinics.

Secondly, one of our residents from Iran gave a presentation to the Iranian Cultural Society about cervical cancer and HPV, which was very well attended and answered many womens’ questions about screening.

Thirdly, two of our resident had arranged to speak with City TV about cervical cancer screening and a segment was filmed on-site at the hospital and aired later that week.

Finally, a few of our residents assisted with Pap smears at one of the women’s clinics to help accommodate the increased volume of patients coming in for testing.

The general feedback we received from the gym members and staff at GoodLife Fitness was positive and they felt that we had provided some good information that the public may not have been aware of. This event also enabled us to remind women to get their pap smears. However, one of the struggles we faced was the limited time gym members had to listen to the information we provided. Our information booths were set up during a Friday morning, which was not necessarily during peak hours and thus we were limited to the numbers of clients attending the gyms at that time.

The presentation given to the Iranian Cultural Society allowed us to target a large group of women who had never undergone cervical cancer screening or were unaware of its importance or existence. They gained a new appreciation of the importance of undergoing cervical cancer screening. They also gained knowledge around cervical cancer and HPV. This presentation generated a lot of questions from the public and allowed us to provide real facts and correct information to these individuals. We plan on continuing this in future years to come.

The final component, sending residents out to one of the clinics, assisted with the increased volume of women coming in for cervical cancer screening and enabled them to open for a few extra days. Residents also utilized this opportunity to further discuss cervical cancer screening and HPV and educate patients on this important subject.
For this project we accessed the information available from the SOGC and HPV awareness sites and received posters and pamphlets in the mail. These were incredibly useful for providing information to the public as we set up at GoodLife Fitness, as well as during our theatre talk. We also created fridge magnets that promoted cervical cancer screening and were helpful reminders to women to undergo regular Pap testing.

In order to attract larger scale public attention to the importance of early cervical cancer detection, we spoke on the breakfast show with City TV News to put out a promotional message encouraging women to attend pap clinics and get screened regularly according to guidelines. This allowed us to target a wider audience than we could have reached by setting up at a single site.

In terms of plans for next year’s CARE project, we are hoping to open a booth at the Calgary Women’s Show on October 27 & 28, 2012. This will allow us to target a large audience of women in Calgary who are interested in their personal health and would likely want to learn more about cervical cancer screening. We also hope to focus our efforts more on populations within our city that would be less likely to have regular pap screening eg. immigrants or those in low socioeconomic areas of the city.
University of Ottawa Pap Smear Campaign

Health advocacy is one of the core competencies required by the Royal College. At the University of Ottawa Ob/Gyn residency program, this aspect of training has been taught by means of didactic lectures and round tables. Prompted by a pilot health advocacy curriculum from Gynecologic Oncologists of Canada (GOC) as part of National Cervical Cancer Awareness Week, Ob/Gyn residents at University of Ottawa created an on-the-spot PAP testing clinic. The project was designed to increase cervical cancer awareness and screening by providing both information regarding cervical cancer screening and an easy, convenient location for women to obtain a Pap smear.

All thirty-five Ob/Gyn residents participated. A project manager was chosen who further coordinated operations. One staff member was assigned to the project. Residents were grouped according to year of training, and were assigned a specific broad task. These were further divided among individuals within each group. A two-day on-the-spot PAP testing clinic was held at the General campus of the Ottawa Hospital in the Ob/Gyn clinics. Any woman wishing to have a PAP test was eligible to participate. No appointment or referral was required. The event was advertised via social media (including radio), overhead announcements, hospital publications, internal hospital email, and posters within the hospital. In addition, an information booth was sent up in the main entrance of the hospital where information was provided about cervical cancer screening, pap smears and HPV. A number of donated pamphlets were available with links to resources for those looking for more information. Women were informed about the pap clinic and encouraged to go and get their pap smear if they required one.

Overall, 70 women were seen in clinic and received pap smears. Of these, three cases of ASCUS, one case of LSIL and one case of endometrial carcinoma were detected. Each patient was phoned upon receipt of cytology and informed of their test results. This Pap clinic was determined to be a successful endeavor based on the number of women who received cervical cancer screening in a convenient way. The majority of patients seen were women in the health profession who work awkward hours that make it difficult for them to see their primary care provider regularly. Furthermore, although difficult to quantify, the information booth was successful in catching the attention of women who wanted more information about cervical cancer and especially the HPV virus. We suspect that more than the seventy women who were screened were affected because the education provided through advertising and the information booth has likely prompted other women to contact their own physician for their PAP test. This project served many of the residents as a great learning opportunity around the CANmed role of Health Advocacy and using their expertise to influence individual and community health.

In the future, we hope to extend the clinics to both campuses of The Ottawa Hospital, reaching a greater number of women. We hope to make it an annual event, which will be anticipated by female staff, prompting regular screening.
University of Saskatchewan Obstetrics and Gynaecology

CARE Project Fundraising Initiative

The OBGYN Residents in Saskatoon have decided to direct our CARE Project toward a community initiative that is near and dear to our hearts.

Sexual Health Centre Saskatoon (formerly Planned Parenthood Saskatoon Centre) is a youth-friendly, pro-choice charitable organization. The SHCS serves Saskatoon and the surrounding community, providing sexual health information and resources, low-cost birth control, pregnancy options counseling and support, and doctor referrals.

Each month, the University of Saskatchewan OBGYN residents volunteers at the SHCS, providing medical care to anyone who shows up to the drop-in clinic. This is a very special community resource and we all value the time we spend at the SHCS. It is very clear that this program has a very important and supportive role in the community, which is greatly appreciated by all who come through the doors.

This year, a collaborative effort on the part of the residents, attendings, SHCS and nursing staff helped our Second Annual CARE Project Fundraising Bake Sale for the SHCS come to fruition. The goodies were sold in the Royal University Hospital mall and we had a lovely little set up. The bake sale proved to be wildly successful, selling out and raising a total of $860 in total! This bake sale was so successful that we are in talks with the SHCS to have a second CARE Project fundraiser in the next few months.

The money has been directed toward the SHCS Education Program, which at this point is underfunded. The Education Program involves offering presentations in the community on diverse sexual health topics including birth control options, safer sex and STI information and education for parents on how to talk to youth about sexual health issues, amongst other topics. Saskatoon has some of the highest STI rates in Canada, and so we feel that any fundraising efforts put towards this SHCS Education Program is time and effort well spent!

We look forward to our next fundraising endeavor!
Planning for Pregnancy and Beyond

*CARE Project 2012 University of Toronto*

Planning for Pregnancy and Beyond is an informative and interactive educational workshop that has been such a success since its initiation over 4 years ago. It was an initiative started by Dr. Yolanda Kirkham who had an interest in advocating women’s health in our community. With the help of Kaye Francis at the Family Health Center at the University of Toronto and with supervision by faculty member Dr. Dana Soroka, residents have been providing sessions on a volunteer basis outside of academic time every 3-4 months for more than 3 years. Attendance ranges from 12-25 women and partners depending on the time of year and the feedback has been tremendously positive.

Planning for pregnancy can be a stressful time in a woman’s life and using unreliable internet resource can make the process even more taxing. Through Planning for Pregnancy and Beyond we have helped women take the anxiety out of the unknown. We have empowered them to advocate for their wellness during this important phase of their lives through the comfort of knowledge. Since its start, we have provided over 200 participants with information regarding questions around conception, health concerns and risks during pregnancy, including rarely discussed topics such as risks of advanced maternal age, dental concerns and intimacy; health care provider options, including midwives, family doctors or obstetricians; antenatal care and screening tests, labour and delivery, and post-partum issues. We also provide them with further resources to obtain more information beyond the framework of the workshop. More importantly, with the help of our partnership with the Family Health Center, we also touch on topics such as substance and partner abuse, various social assistances available to women in their community and where to seek help. The welcoming and interactive nature of the sessions allows an informal discussion with trusted presenters providing reliable information.

Planning for Pregnancy and Beyond is a dynamic workshop that changes from session to session depending on past participant feedback and on what future participants want to know. Feedback from participants indicate that we are reaching out to highly educated women of various ethnic groups who are mostly in their thirties. Participants consistently rate the sessions as “excellent” and “educational”. It is our hope that the sustainability and success of this project will encourage future partnerships beyond our current venue to reach women of various age and socioeconomic groups. It is a wonderful opportunity for residents to become collaborators within the university and act as health advocates for the women and their partners in their community. It places importance on specific CanMEDS roles such as Collaborator, Communicator and Heath Advocate. As a resident who has been providing sessions for over 2 years, I can say that presenting these workshops has afforded me remarkable satisfaction and enjoyment. I am so proud to be a member of such a noteworthy initiative started and run by the residents in the program of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Toronto.
McGill OB/GYN CARE Project: The Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope

September 2011

In September 2011, the Obstetrics and Gynecology residents of McGill invited all ob/gyn residents, staffs, nurses, workers in the department and their families to join them for the Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope held in Parc Lafontaine in Montreal. These walks have been organized nationwide since the first walk in 2002. The funds raised during these events are used for research and awareness in the community for ovarian cancer which, as we all know, is a major threat in women's health where further advances are necessary for prevention and early diagnosis.

McGill OB/GYN team was comprised of more than 50 walkers on that day. We fundraised close to 5000$. For our first annual McGill OB/GYN Team walk, this was a great success. We hope this will be the first of many walks to come. We are hopeful to gather more walkers and raise more money next year!

We are hoping that next year with early planning with posters and reminder emails, we may increase participation to 100 walkers and raise 10,000$. We also want to build on team spirit by making sure there are enough team t-shirts and posters, and by organizing a BBQ/Lunch post-walk to celebrate.
Memorial University CARE project: The Ovarian Cancer Canada Walk of Hope

The Walk of Hope is an annual event organized to support Ovarian Cancer Canada and raise awareness about ovarian cancer. This past year a team of 9 obstetrical residents from Memorial University of Newfoundland joined the other several thousand individuals’ country wide for the 5 kilometer walk. A total of $3102.50 was raised by our team, good for the 5th overall spot at the St John’s walk site. We also boasted having the 5th overall individual fundraiser in Dr. Michael Hartman, who raised $944.00.

The event was well worth doing and enjoyed by all who attended. Registration and fundraising is all website based and most donations were collected online www.ovariancanada.org/walk-of-hope. The walk takes place in September each year, giving ample time to organize over the summer. We would encourage other programs to sign up in the future.