

NCCP Oncology Medication Safety Review

Heckmann, P., McCarthy, T., Hanan, T., Walsh, O., Mellett, C., O'Reilly, S. National Cancer Control Programme, Ireland

Driver for Patient Safety

33,000 people receive treatment with **systemic anti-cancer therapy (chemotherapy)** every year and this number continues to rise (Fig1).

The specific challenges to patient safety include:

- expansion in the number of cytotoxic drugs
- increased use of oral chemotherapy
- increased complexity of treatment regimens

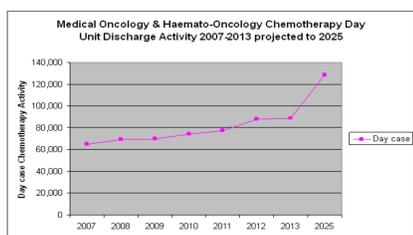


Fig 1: Projected growth in Chemotherapy Day Unit Discharge Activity. Projections source: NCRI, 2013

Patient Safety Initiative

Review of **chemotherapy services** in the 26 publicly-funded chemotherapy day units (Fig2).

Co-sponsored by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) and the HSE Quality and Patient Safety Directorate

To assess services, policies and practices from a quality assurance and patient safety perspective

Methods

Self-administered questionnaire.

One-day site visit by a multi-disciplinary NCCP review team.

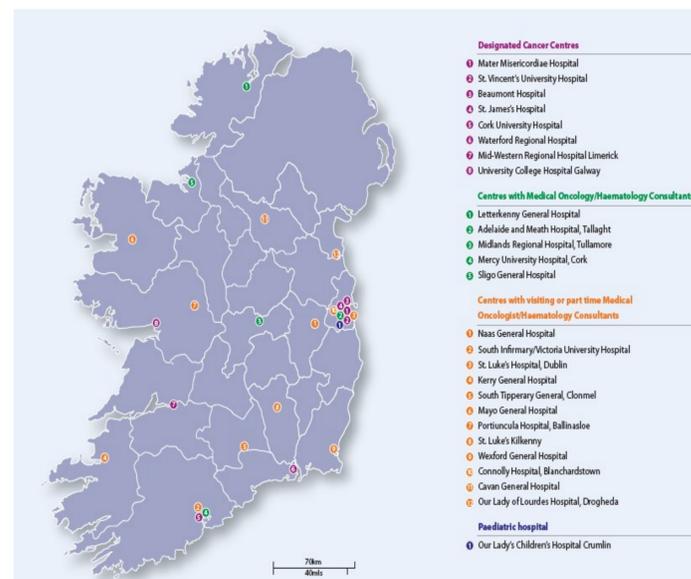


Figure 2: Location of day units included in the review

Challenges

- Requirements for planning and data collection by hospitals.
- Time & organisation for site visits.
- Variation in organisation of services and complexity of care.
- Comparability of data.
- IT systems to support implementation

- of the Review's recommendations.
- Capacity of day wards to deliver services.

Supports

- Valuable engagement of hospital staff.
- Open sharing of concerns, risks and examples of risk mitigation.

Benefits and Outcomes

The review made **93 recommendations**, covering the areas shown in Fig 3. These were cross referenced to the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare.

The Review's recommendations, and resultant policies and guidelines build on the Department of Health's 1996 "Guidelines for the safe administration of cytotoxic medical preparations in the treatment of patients with cancer".

The Review's recommendations are aimed at enhancing the safe delivery of chemotherapy services in day wards in cancer hospitals in Ireland.

Chemotherapy Ordering and Prescribing

Administration and Monitoring of Chemotherapy

Policies and Guidelines

Treatment Planning and Clinical Assessment

Chemotherapy Preparation, Labelling and Record Keeping

Intrathecal Chemotherapy

Governance and Service Configuration

Risk Management

Handling, Disposal and Storage of Cytotoxic Drugs

Built Environment, Activity and Equipment

Management of Unscheduled Care

Staffing

Information for Patients and Carers

Staff Training

Chemotherapy Protocols

Fig 3: Themes of the Review

Implementation of Review Findings

- The findings of the review were **published in January 2014**, followed by the development of an implementation plan and establishment of an **implementation audit process**.
- The first implementation status report was collated in early autumn 2014 (Fig 4).
- National working groups are in place for: oral chemotherapy, intrathecal chemotherapy, medical oncology clinical information system and day unit facilities.
- Information on the review and its implementation is available on the NCCP website at www.hse.ie/nccponcsafetyreview.

Implementation Status (October 2014):

- 55%** implemented (n=81)
- 26%** underway
- 12%** not commenced
- 6%** not relevant to the individual hospital

Fig 4: Implementation Status of Review Recommendations

References

1. National Cancer Control Programme Oncology Medication Safety Review Report. Heckmann P, McCarthy T, Walsh O & Hanan T. January 2014. Available at www.hse.ie/nccponcsafetyreview
2. National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare, HIQA, 2012.
3. Guidelines for the safe administration of cytotoxic medical preparations in the treatment of patients with cancer, Department of Health, 1996.

Acknowledgements

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