

Pediatric Massage Therapy in Oncology Clinic: Lessons Learned while Integrating into a Pre-existing Clinic Setting

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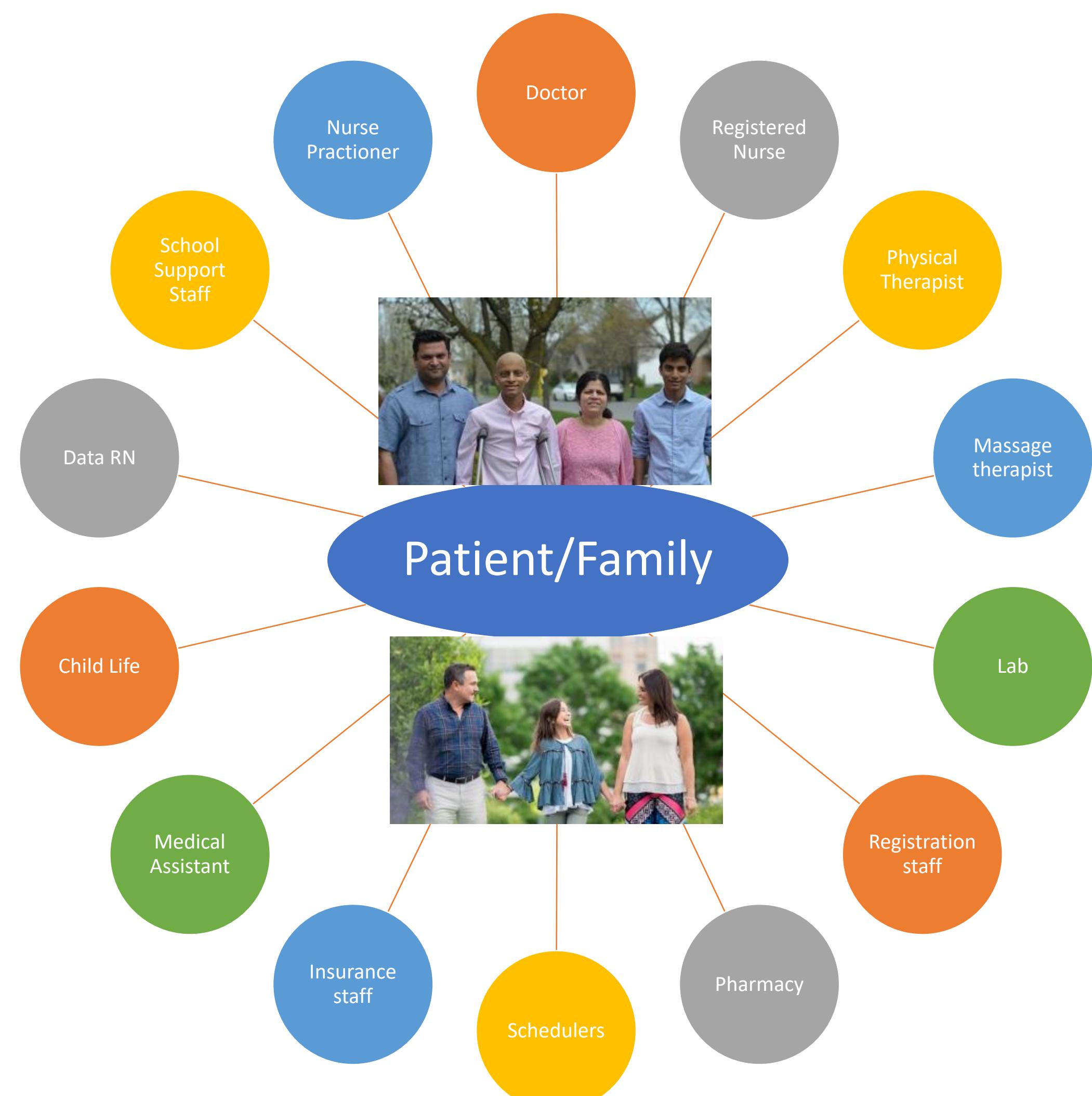
BACKGROUND

- Non-pharmacology based pain management offerings including massage and physical therapy are an important growing component of integrative care models for pediatric patients with a cancer diagnosis.
- Pediatric cancers make up < 1% of all cancers diagnosed each year. An estimated 10,590 new cancer cases will be diagnosed among children 0 to 14 years of age in the US in 2018. Cancer is the second-leading cause of death among children ages 1-14 years (after accidents), accounting for 13% of deaths in 2015¹.
- Massage offers support for managing cancer-related and cancer treatment related symptoms including pain, anxiety and fatigue⁴.

PURPOSE

To successfully integrate massage therapy into an existing outpatient oncology clinic in order to improve the medical care model for patients with a cancer diagnosis. To provide patient and family with tools to reduce dysfunction, pain, and anxiety, thereby improving functional status and quality of life.

JOINING THE CLINIC TEAM



RESULTS

A total of 27 patients, 25months-24 years of age were seen over a 11 week period, with 3-5 patient visits per session. Reasons for massage included body pain/discomfort, muscular tightness, anxiety (treatment and post procedure), relaxation and supportive care. Interventions included: patient massage, caregiver education and discussion to establish rapport. There was unanimous positive verbal feedback from the interdisciplinary team and patients with no adverse outcomes noted.



DISCUSSION

This integrative clinic model of service delivery has shown that it is feasible to add pediatric massage therapy services into an outpatient oncology clinic. Support from a donor family and a clinic receptive to integrating massage were key factors to success. This has resulted in great inter-professional collaborative opportunities and integrated patient care that has been well received by patients, families and the medical team.

• "The massage therapy program have been an integral addition to the services we provide to the Voorhees Hematology and Oncology patients. The services provided have truly been beneficial to helping our patients with relaxation and pain management. Additionally, Tiffany has provided our patients and their families with resources and strategies that they can carry over at home to help alleviate whatever discomfort they are experiencing."

Child Life

• "Integration of Massage therapy has supported patients with anxiety towards painful procedure. Some of my adolescent male patients complain of abdominal discomfort and on-going headaches. Tiffany has educated these patients with hands on technique and handouts for the patient to continue practice of massage at home. I have incorporated this information in my discharge teaching with the patient and family."

Nursing

• "Massage has helped significantly with some patients anxiety with IV and port placements, and I have seen patients become much more relaxed after you have done massage on them. I know the patients and parents really like the massage because if the patient is happy and relaxed, so is the parent and vice versa."

Nursing

• "The largest benefit I have noticed is reducing the anxiety in our children, regardless of their age. What is the indirect benefits of reducing the patient's anxiety? It's automatic, when the child's anxiety is reduced, so is the parent's. You can only imagine how helpless the parent feels when they are not able to console their child. Your approach to working with our kiddos, reduces everyone's anxiety. Your soft voice, gentle touch and just the quiet and peaceful environment you produce is beyond description."

Social work

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Participating in interdisciplinary morning rounds
- Connecting with Nurses, Child life, PT for care coordination
- Working with clinic flow and patient/family needs
- Completing regular intake, sessions, caregiver education, follow-up and rapport building with patients
- Communicating session progress verbally with nurses, PT and other care team members regularly
- Documenting all encounters in the EMR in a clear and timely manner

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