

Ototoxicity Management ANNIE Protocol: A VHA Innovators' Network Project

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INTRODUCTION

- People diagnosed with cancer and other infections often are treated with ototoxic medications that can impact the auditory and vestibular systems.
- As an increased number of people have successful treatments, there are also an increased number of people who live through survivorship with side effects of treatments, impacting their quality of life (QoL).
- Hearing loss is associated with a social isolation, reduced workplace productivity, poor self esteem, depression, and cognitive decline.
- Tinnitus may be associated with emotional distress, difficulty concentrating, insomnia, and in extreme cases, catastrophic thinking.
- Health care providers and patients have limited health literacy regarding ototoxicity and impacts on QoL.
- Audiology support services are not sought by patients even though they are available.
- Recent survey of 631 patients with cancer showed 74% of those patients use mobile devices and 39% said they would be interested in receiving support tools through their mobile device.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- As part of the Innovator's Network, Spark Seed Spread program in VA, we submitted a project to create an App that would help patient's self manage any ototoxic side effects and provide resources
- Through the SSS innovation process, creating a standalone App in VA is difficult, but within VA, there is a system in place for patient self-management: The ANNIE App.
- ANNIE can be accessed by patients directly through self-enrollment or enrolled by a VA clinician.
- Once enrolled, Veterans will receive automated educational text messages
- The Ototoxicity Management ANNIE protocol was developed to provide weekly educational material throughout their chemotherapy treatment. Education includes links to an NCRAR brochure, symptom reminders, and recommendations for hearing protection and fall prevention.
- If your clinic is interested in using this pilot protocol, please contact Trisha.Milnes@va.gov

RESULTS

This is ANNIE. Symptoms of ototoxicity can be mild or severe and can include tinnitus, hearing loss or ringing in your ears.

Imbalance is light-headedness, feeling off-balance, spinning sensations or vision that seems to bounce or jiggle

Ototoxicity can increase over time & makes ears more prone to damage from noise. Avoid loud noise. Contact your treatment team/Audiology if you notice changes.

Tinnitus is hissing, ringing, buzzing, in the ears or head, lasting 2 minutes or more.

Hearing loss is difficulty understanding speech when several people are talking or there is noise.