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# Identifying the Causes of Cancer Readmissions: A Patient Centered Approach

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**Identifying the causes of cancer readmissions: A patient centered approach**

**Introduction:** Readmission rates of cancer patients remain high, while the rates of many other conditions are decreasing in the United States. Cancer patients are a plurality of patients readmitted to hospitals within 30 days of discharge, and have a high rate of avoidable readmission. Therefore, it is important to understand why these readmissions happen in order to prevent their occurrence.

**Objective:** This study hopes to identify specific, and potentially personal, reasons that bring cancer patients back to the hospital. Patient perspective may reveal trends that are not apparent in medical record chart reviews. This information can present an opportunity to improve the quality of oncology care, and reduce the number of preventable readmissions.

**Methods:** Researchers will approach any oncology patient with an unplanned readmission to the Medical Oncology Service at TJUH, and conduct an interview if patients consent. Interviews based on an interview guide will be conducted until responses fail to elucidate new themes. After the interviews end, they will be transcribed, coded, and then analyzed for themes regarding circumstances leading to any unplanned readmission.

**Results:** The interviews are still yielding new themes, and thus are ongoing. So far, major themes that have emerged center around caretaker-patient communication, expectation management, and home-care assistance.

**Discussion:** Patients believe more communication and realistic descriptions of the pain, nausea, and other expected symptoms can assuage fears and prevent hasty returns to the hospital. Improved communication – phone calls, home-nursing visits, explicit discharge instructions – can be a step in helping patients navigate their discharges and prevent avoidable readmissions.