Validation of a global self-assessment and peer-review quality programme dedicated to comprehensive cancer centres: A method to assess, improve and promote quality of integrated care, research and education in cancer centres.

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Abstract:
Background: Oncology is a speciality requiring a combination of multidisciplinary expertises, novel technology, integration of innovation into care and research efforts in order to improve the quality of life and survival of patients. Provision of high-quality care and improvement of disease outcome should be promoted in cancer centres.

Methods: The Organisation of European Cancer Institutes developed an Accreditation Programme combining: 1-a quantitative questionnaire assessing the human, technical and financial resources and activities in care, research and education dedicated to oncology; 2- a set of standards and criteria for high-quality cancer management integrated in an electronic tool with a scoring system of compliance; 3- a peer-review process for review of the self-assessment outcome and on-site visits; 4- a report and improvement plan allowing to designate comprehensive cancer centers complying with required criteria for high-quality comprehensive cancer patient management. All components of the Accreditation Programme were tested in 8 different voluntary cancer centres in Europe. The objectives were to assess the feasibility, reproducibility and acceptance of the Accreditation Programme; to improve the standards and criteria in terms of understanding and consensus; to validate the peer review methodology and establish a method for reporting and implementing an improvement plan; to provide with a preliminary system of designation of comprehensive cancer centres based on criteria of high-quality integrated research, care and education.

Results: The 2 consecutive pilot tests allowed to validate 1- relevant items for the quantitative questionnaire; 2-criteria and standards for high-quality integrated multidisciplinary cancer patient’s management. 3-The impact of the Accreditation Programme on improvement of patients management and professionals involvement.

Conclusions: The OECI Accreditation Programme is ready for dissemination. Participation to the Programme allows development of improvement plans for innovative and integrated comprehensive cancer patients management in cancer centres.

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