The SSWAHS Clinical Cancer Registry

In 2005, SSWAHS became a pilot site for a Clinical Cancer Registry (CCR) Project funded by the Cancer Institute NSW, to collect a standardized clinical cancer minimum data set (CCMDS). The aims of the project were to improve the quantity and quality of cancer information that can be used to monitor cancer patterns of care and service provision in NSW. The CCMDS involves the systematic collection of 50 patient based diagnostic, staging, treatment, quality of care and patient outcome data items. Each year, the SSWAHS CCR collects the CCMDS on over 5000 patients, who were diagnosed or treated within one of SSWAHS’s 11 facilities for their cancer.

CMMDS is collected by 5 FT and 1 PT Cancer Information Managers (CIM). CaseLoad is divided into groups of approximately 1000 cases per annum, with each CIM specialising in one or more topographic cancer sites.

The Evolution

The CCR process needed to be more efficient. An effective method of case finding and abstracting cases, improving case capture rates, and assuring data quality was essential—the REVOLUTION was EVOLVING.

The ideal solution appeared to be electronic data transfer (EDT) from the hospital information systems that would:

- Collect data on a common platform by utilizing data feeds from compatible source systems.
- Have the ability to verify and check data consistency.
- Manually add information from incompatible systems, to complete a patient abstract
- Transfer the completed abstracts into registry software.

Evolution of the Cancer Registry Application (CRA)

An innovative and collaborative project began between CCR, SSWAHS IM & TD, and our software vendor to evolve a system of electronic data transfer (EDT) into a virtual repository (CRA) that captured the CCMDS. Our software vendor provided a U.S based standardised import layout (NAACCR) and developed a patient matching and import function to enable electronic data imports from the virtual repository. IM & TD created an extract file format to conform with NAACCR standards to facilitate data transfer between the 2 systems. The registry staff tested workflow procedures, extract & import functions and data integrity in a lengthy, but productive process.

The CRA successfully implemented a prototype of EDT, which is now an operational element of the CCR process – The CRA.

CRA – The Stepping Stone

The Cancer Registration Application (CRA) is a Web-based subset of a SSWAHS cancer specific data warehouse. It is a virtual interface which allows the user to case-find, view and validate patient-centric cancer information. Information is collated on an electronic form, and allows capture in an automatic extract file which is run on a weekly basis. Currently, cancer information is fed into the CRA from 3 priority sources:

- Changes and additions to the CCMDS
- Specific tumour group data item extensions
- Demographic, Tumour and Treatment
- User Assistance & Matching

These new prospects open a huge array of unanswered questions to which we will investigate further solutions, on our quest to improve cancer registration in SSWAHS.

Over 2 years of hard work has resulted in the SSWAHS CCR achieving full EDT to improve the efficiency and work processes involved in cancer registration. The CRA has demonstrated that efficiencies in case finding and data consolidation can be achieved, and that the problems of system interoperability can be overcome. Implementation of additional data feeds whilst maintaining workflow efficiency and data quality, will present new challenges for the CRA. Increasing data volume and ongoing issues surrounding data standards need to be addressed.

The SSWAHS CCR would like to thank the following contributors for their hard work and dedication in developing our EDT vision.

The SSWAHS CCR Team

Shabari Parasur and Amanda Turville – SSWAHS IM&TD

The Future

The Future for EDT in SSWAHS is bright, and we anticipate continued evaluation and improvement for the CRA and the EDT work processes as we strive for cancer registration excellence.

Acknowledgments

The SSWAHS CCR would like to thank the following contributors for their hard work and dedication in developing our EDT vision.

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