BARIERS TO ACCESSING HEALTH CARE FOR HEMATOPOIETIC CELL TRANSPLANTATION RECIPIENTS LIVING IN RURAL AREAS: PERSPECTIVES FROM HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Heather K. Moore, MPH, CHES, Martha E. Burton Santibañez, MPA, Ellen M. Denzen, MS, Diane W. Carr, MPH, and Elizabeth A. Murphy, EdD, RN

Hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) is a curative therapy for patients with malignant and nonmalignant bone marrow disorders. Life after transplantation can vary significantly among HCT recipients, who deal with a variety of physical and emotional issues. This presents numerous challenges, particularly for rural recipients who are required to travel long distances to access specialized HCT care. The objective of this study was to better understand barriers to providing care for HCT recipients living in rural areas. This study uses a cross-sectional design to collect primary data via an Internet survey of HCT healthcare providers. The authors analyzed factors restricting post-HCT care and whether having standard post-transplantation care instructions influenced the resources provided to distant-to-care recipients. Respondents reported limited transportation, coordination of care, and distance to facility as major barriers to post-HCT care, regardless of the number of distant-to-care recipients treated annually. HCT centers with standard post-transplantation care instructions were more likely to provide visits from social workers and medical leave resources to distant-to-care recipients. These instructions may improve recipient and local provider ability to make informed decisions regarding post-HCT care. The findings will help guide the development of programs and resources targeted to recipients of HCT who are distant to care.