

Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative

Breast Cancer and Professional Education

Summer 1995

Mandate of the Professional Education Strategy

To design, develop, and facilitate the implementation of a professional education strategy which addresses recommendation #27 of the Report of the National Forum

To give high priority to the development and evaluation of communication skills training that targets practising health professionals - particularly oncologists and surgeons - and health sciences students. Such training should be based on respect for individual rights and choices and the importance of shared decision-making this involves:

- *working with medical professional organizations and women with breast cancer to explore innovative models of multidisciplinary communication skills education*
- *modifying undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate training and including communication skills training in medical schools, hospitals and continuing medical education programs*
- *providing communication skills workshops for patients and their families, with special attention to ethnocultural background and those disadvantaged by virtue of age, education, socio-economic status and place of residence.*

Introduction

Health Canada has established a committee geared toward developing a strategy to enhance the continuing medical education of physicians in the area of breast cancer. The agreed-upon philosophy driving the strategy is a recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary care and the health care team.

The committee, which is multidisciplinary, is constituted of family physicians, oncologists, radiologists, oncology nurses, visiting nurses, psychologists, medical educators, as well as women affected by breast cancer. As a first topic, it has targeted physicians' communications skills. In the initial phase, the committee, will develop and/or set standards, methodologies and approaches to educational programs in the area of communication skills of the practising physician. In addition, the Committee will encourage and support mechanisms, programs and interventions that are currently underway or will be developed to actively alter communication patterns in the physician-patient relationship.



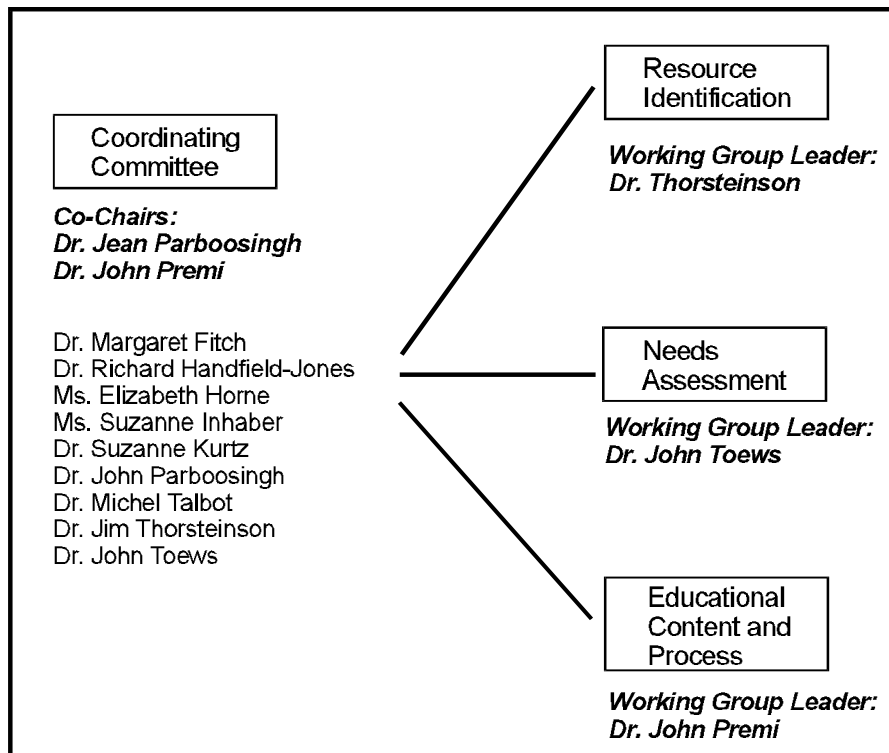
Anticipated Outcomes of the Strategy

The intended outcomes of the strategy are to:

- Develop mechanisms for directing physicians to recognize the importance of enhanced communication skills and participation in these programs. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of a tool for ensuring ongoing feedback to physicians.
- Develop, disseminate, and publicize necessary parameters and components of communication skills programs specific to breast cancer. Two concurrent streams of the strategy are being developed; one that targets physician interventions and one that targets patient interventions to achieve the ultimate goal of enhancing the physician-patient dyad.
- Identify effective programs already in existence including those specifically oriented towards breast cancer.

The Composition of the Strategy

The Professional Education Strategy will be made up of a Coordinating Committee and three working groups: Resource Identification, Needs Assessment and Educational Content and Process. It is anticipated that a fourth working group will be established. This group will be charged with outlining the dissemination plan for the various stakeholder groups (physicians, consumers, and other health professionals).



Tasks

A. Working Group: Resource Identification

- To identify programs in health and related fields which possess a significant communication skill development component.

B. Working Group: Needs Assessment

- Develop innovative methods of measuring the quality of the physician - patient interaction.
- Identify gaps in the perception of patients and physicians of their communication skills.

C. Working Group: Educational Content and Process

- To integrate the information from the above committees.
- To develop criteria for effective educational communication skills programs.

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Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative

Committee Membership for Professional Education and Breast Cancer Strategy

Summer 1995

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