

Expediting Diagnosis

Nurse Educator Initiative Boosts Awareness, Screenings

Challenge

Minimize market share loss and find new opportunities for on-label usage of 20-year-old brand.

Solution

Develop and deploy a specially trained team of clinical nurse educators to disseminate information on diagnosis, disease state and accurate drug administration.

Results

Fourteen educators reached more than 2,000 targeted prescribers, resulting in an increased number of screening tests and earlier diagnosis. The program was so effective that its expansion included the addition of 15 nurses.

“There have been excellent success stories coming from this team. With this type of impact we will find and help get neuroendocrine tumor (NET) patients diagnosed earlier.”

– Customer’s Product Director

Rejuvenating Mature Brand

For more than 20 years, this Quintiles customer enjoyed a leading market position and strong brand recognition for its drug used to treat carcinoid tumors. As with most mature drugs, there was a need to maximize the value of the brand franchise by identifying untapped opportunities for growth and to minimize market share loss to competitive newcomers.

Brand Analysis: Target Difficult Diagnosis

Carcinoid tumors are an unusual, slow-growing type of cancer that most commonly appear in the gastrointestinal tract. Diagnosis is challenging because carcinoids rarely cause signs or symptoms until late in the disease and, under a microscope, a carcinoid tumor can appear to be benign even though it may have already spread.

Helping Healthcare Providers Help Patients

While oncologists were very familiar with the disease state and therapeutic treatment, the diagnosis of carcinoids was generally the province of gastroenterologists (GIs). Quintiles and the drug manufacturer developed an initiative to support GIs by meeting their educational needs for diagnosing and monitoring patients. Specifically, this entailed:

- > *Enhancing knowledge of the disease state, consistent history of under- and misdiagnosis of carcinoid, and diagnostic testing for carcinoid*
- > *Educating GIs about the signs and symptoms of carcinoid tumors and the biochemical markers for differential diagnosis*
- > *Providing information about early referrals to oncologists*

Quintiles initial 14 clinical and nurse educators were so effective that an additional 15 nurses were added, bringing the total to 29. With the addition of the nurses, the team continued calling on the GI physicians, 40% of the time further building disease awareness, while using the other 60% of their time calling on oncology nurses to provide training on mixing and administering the oncology products.

12-Week Implementation Improves Outcomes

Knowing that personal contact from credible healthcare practitioners is one of the most effective means of imparting a message, Quintiles trained and deployed a clinical nurse educator field force of 14 nurses with oncology, gastroenterology and industry experience. In just 12 weeks from the date of the initial proposal, the team began its education efforts, which included:

- > *Development of educational messaging for targeted prescribers about the impact of early tumor identification in improved patient outcomes, as well as the proper usage and administration of the therapeutic treatment*
- > *Identification of key opinion leaders in gastroenterology and targeted prescribers*
- > *Communication with these practitioners to find out what kind of information they would find most helpful*
- > *Creation of informational literature including printed materials, slide sets, CDs, patient pieces, and more*
- > *In-person visits to nurses and physicians in GI practices*
- > *Engagement in clinical discussions with GI physicians and nurses to identify patients not responding to their current IBS therapy who would be appropriate to screen for carcinoid*

Awareness Campaign Doubled as Behavior Changed

During the first two months, the 14 nurse educators reached more than 2,000 targeted prescribers. More importantly, as evidenced by the increased number of screening tests ordered by healthcare providers, it successfully changed behavior. The program was so effective, in fact, that an additional 15 nurses were added, bringing the total to 29. The outreach effort was also expanded to include:

- > *Coordinated programs that brought GI and oncology clinicians together to discuss the disease and diagnosis as well as to foster collaboration on behalf of the patient*
- > *Peer-to-peer networking with oncology nurses to gain access to closed key accounts*
- > *Needs assessments within key accounts in order to provide pertinent product services*
- > *In-office education with oncology nurses on carcinoid to increase effective patient management*

In short, Quintiles nurse educators enhanced the disease state knowledge and symptom management. As a result, patients were diagnosed earlier and could be treated earlier — an obvious benefit to all.

Quintiles Inspires Earlier Diagnosis: What Physicians Have to Say

“I think it is a good idea that this team is asking GI doctors not to assume that a patient’s symptoms are always IBS. I hear this as a frequent misdiagnosis of carcinoid tumors.”

“I learned about 5HiAA and CgA levels in med school but had pretty much forgotten about them. I will perform these tests on IBS patients who do not respond to therapy. I am always looking for tests to offer these patients as they are so sick and are always asking for more testing.”

“The CNE has added value to my office. I am now screening patients for carcinoid that are not responding to IBS therapy.”

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