Submitted by:
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NCCN Guidelines Panel: Distress Management Panel

Dear NCCN Distress Management Panel members,

On behalf of the Radiation Therapy Oncology Group (RTOG, now NRG Oncology) trial 0841 study team, I respectfully request the NCCN Distress Management Panel to review the attached publication for inclusion in the panel’s review of recommended procedures for distress screening.

Specific Changes: Update guidelines to recommend the administration of a brief measure of depression, in addition to the NCCN Distress Thermometer as a tool to screen for distress.

FDA Clearance: Not applicable.

Rationale:
As described in the publication submitted with this letter (Wagner et al. Cancer, 2017), we conducted a large trial to evaluate tools for screening for mood disorders among outpatients receiving radiotherapy for cancer. We administered several depression screening measures and used the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-IV (SCID) to define “caseness” with regard to the presence of current mood disorders. We found that the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ) 2-item scale had good psychometric properties (sensitivity and specificity) for screening for mood disorders and was equivalent to the longer PHQ-9 item version. We also found that the NCCN Distress Thermometer (NCCN-DT) did not adequately detect cancer survivors with mood disorders. Based on this finding, we respectfully ask the NCCN Distress Management Panel to update recommendations to include a brief depression screening measure in addition to the NCCN-DT for psychosocial distress screening.

The following articles are submitted in support of this proposed change:


As a prior member of the NCCN Distress Management Panel, I gratefully acknowledge contributions of panel members to improving psychosocial care in oncology and wish to thank the panel for reviewing this submission.

Sincerely,

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Professor
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