

Integrating IPU principles for Improved lung cancer care at an Oncology center

Yoanna Vutova¹, Adriana Dacheva¹, Rossitsa Krasteva², Slaveyko Djambazov¹,

¹HTA Ltd., Sofia

²UniHospital, Panagyurishte

Introduction

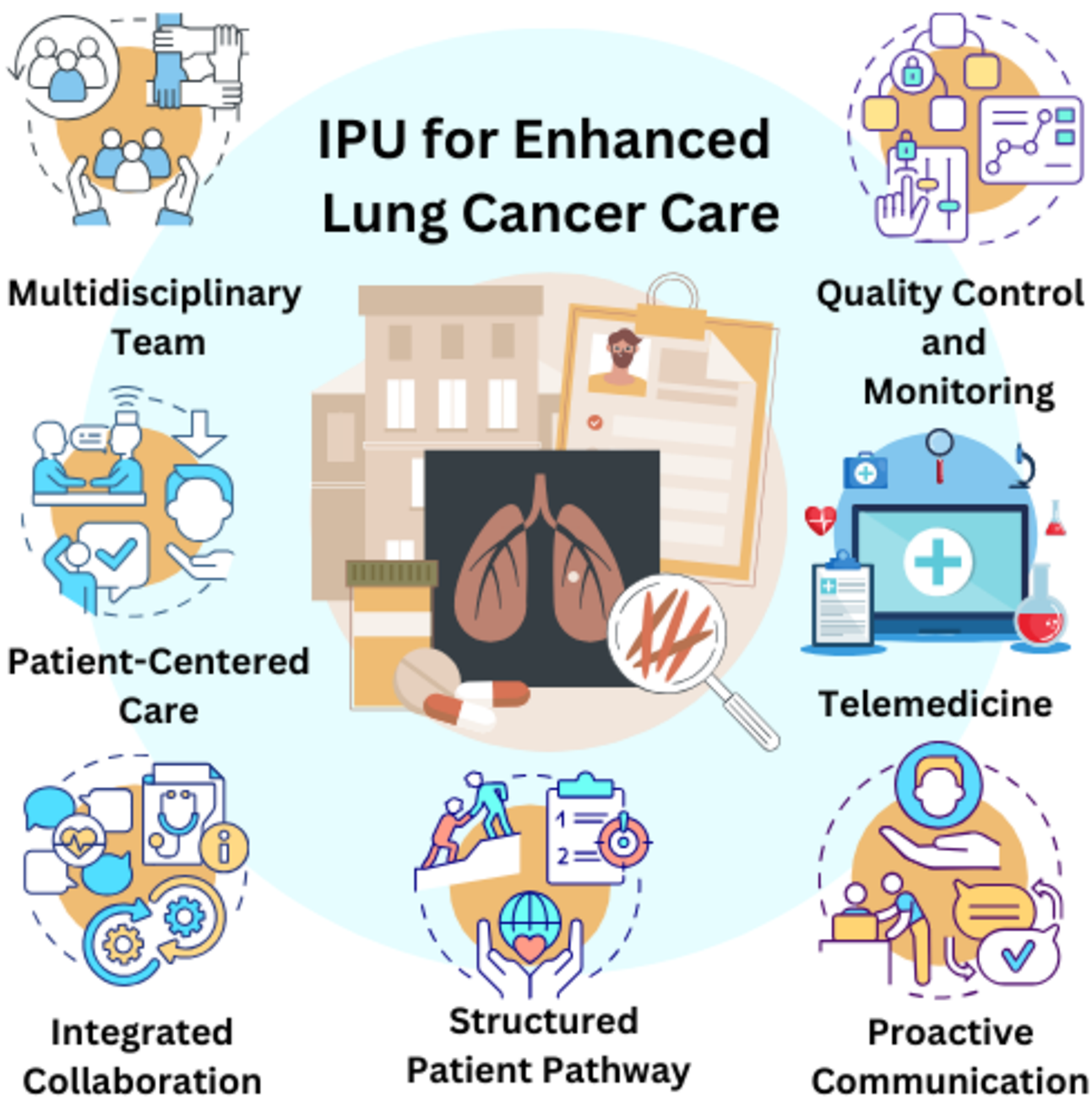
The integration of cancer care through Integrated Practice Unit (IPU) principles is essential for improving patient outcomes and optimizing healthcare delivery. This study focuses on implementing IPU principles, as defined by Michael Porter, for lung cancer patients, at an oncology center.

Methodology

An extensive evaluation involving over 90 hours of data collection was conducted through site visits, interviews with key personnel, shadowing, and standardized questionnaires. The study included the departments of medical oncology, nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy. Data collection focused on defining roles, responsibilities, and treatment processes. The implementation strategy involved the application of value-based healthcare principles and Time-Driven Activity-Based Costing exercise to enhance care delivery and resource utilization.

Results

The study provided several recommendations focused on the integration of IPU principles to enhance cancer care. (1) Establish IPU for lung cancer by forming multidisciplinary teams including medical oncologists, radiologists, surgeons, psychologists, specialized nurses, and pharmacists. (2) Implement continuous monitoring of clinical outcomes and quality of life indicators using standardized sets, tools and questionnaires. (3) Integrate telemedicine to improve accessibility, follow-up care, and facilitate regular monitoring and support for patients. (4) Establish proactive communication channels with primary care providers and other referring sources to ensure seamless coordination of care throughout the entire treatment cycle. (5) Organize regular formal and informal meetings among the multidisciplinary team to discuss patient cases, treatment plans, and progress, ensuring a collaboration. (6) Develop and implement clearly defined patient pathways in lung cancer treatment, ensuring consistency and optimizing the use of resources.



Conclusion

Implementing IPU principles in the oncology center demonstrated significant potential for improving the quality and efficiency of lung cancer care. The integration of multidisciplinary teams, continuous outcome monitoring, and enhanced patient communication supports a coordinated and patient-centered healthcare model. These strategies promote a long-term transformation towards value-based healthcare, ultimately improving care for cancer patients.

