Left behind: The Cardio-Oncology knowledge gap among primary care providers
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Background
- The mission of cardio-oncology is to improve the cardiovascular health of patients and survivors of cancer through education, training, and research development in an interdisciplinary collaboration.
- In recent years, this field has had increased recognition among cardiologists and oncologists.
- The field has not yet reached the radar of general internal medicine practitioners.
- At the University of Connecticut (UConn), we sought to investigate this knowledge gap among primary care providers.

Methods
- A 20-questions online survey designed to gauge the participants' knowledge on the cardiac side effects of chemotherapy, cardiac surveillance, radiation-induced heart disease, and cardiac tumors, was sent to all residents and attending physicians of primary care medicine at UConn.
- 5 additional questions were designed to assess physicians’ level of confidence and pattern of practice in the interconnection of cancer and heart disease.
- The survey was made available during a 6-month period from April to September 2019 (response rate 30.3%).

Results

Conclusions
- A survey of primary care providers at UConn identified limited cardio-oncology knowledge base and a low confidence level in the cardiovascular management of cancer patients and survivors.
- It revealed that many primary care providers do not incorporate a patient’s history of cancer and the type of cancer treatment they received into their management decisions.
- This can result in delayed referrals and inappropriate care of cancer patients.
- Frontline providers such as primary care doctors should be educated about cardio-oncology.
- We intend to implement basic cardio-oncology didactics into our primary care curriculum.

References
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