
Chemotherapy Education and Support

A model for use in the ambulatory care setting

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BACKGROUND: Oncology nurses are challenged to coordinate an effective, evidence-based approach to comprehensive patient education, symptom management, and psychosocial support for patients with pancreatic and colorectal cancers during chemotherapy.

OBJECTIVES: The purpose of the study was to develop and evaluate a nurse-led psychoeducational intervention using a multimedia tool.

METHODS: Development and testing of the intervention was grounded in the Science and Practice Aligned Within Nursing model for evidence-based practice implementation.

FINDINGS: Forty-five participants completed the study (29 with pancreatic cancer and 16 with colorectal cancer). Patient knowledge increased significantly in patients with pancreatic cancer following the intervention ($p = 0.05$).

KEYWORDS

chemotherapy; patient education; oncology nursing; evidence-based practice

DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER

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CANCER CARE TEAMS ARE CHALLENGED to implement effective education and support for patients undergoing treatment. For patients with pancreatic or colorectal cancer, chemotherapy is often indicated to achieve the most favorable outcomes but often effectuates considerable symptom burden (Chu & DeVita, 2020). Collaborative Oncology Nursing Society and American Society of Clinical Oncology guidelines specify the following essential elements for preparing patients with cancer for chemotherapy: orientation to the infusion setting; review of goals and the duration of therapy, chemotherapy drugs, supportive medications, expected side effects, and side effect management; contact information for the cancer team; signs and symptoms that indicate an urgent need to contact the provider; and resources for promoting adaptive coping skills (Neuss et al., 2016; Tariman et al., 2014). Although essentials are universally accepted, marked variations exist in methods used for preparing patients for chemotherapy. A standardized approach positively affects nurse and patient satisfaction, as well as the quality of care (Gallegos et al., 2019). To prepare patients to receive chemotherapy in ambulatory cancer centers, provider teams consider their patient population, resources needed to educate and support, and the care environment (Neuss et al., 2016).

Nurses are instrumental members of the team in educating and supporting patients with cancer receiving treatment. Nurse-patient interaction and the use of a combination of print materials and multimedia resources are most effective in promoting positive patient outcomes (Marcus et al., 2013; Neuss et al., 2016; Prouse, 2010). Education reduces anxiety in patients receiving chemotherapy, and repetition promotes retention of information (Garcia, 2014; Valenti, 2014). Psychoeducation, a combination of education and support, increases knowledge and satisfaction with care (Gysels & Higginson, 2007) and reduces symptom distress and caregiver strain (Applebaum & Breitbart, 2013; Matsuda et al., 2014; Park & Bae, 2017; Zhou et al., 2015). Nursing follow-up by telephone is effective in reducing treatment-related symptom distress and maintaining patient safety (Dickinson et al., 2014).