Management of Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor and Multikinase Inhibitor Side Effects

Laura S. Wood, RN, MSN, OCN®

The availability of vascular endothelial growth factor and multikinase inhibitors (MKIs) has enhanced treatment strategies for patients with advanced kidney cancer. Side effects associated with the agents include dermatologic toxicities, gastrointestinal toxicities, and hematologic and metabolic abnormalities that may interfere with treatment adherence. Nurses play a key role in managing side effects associated with emerging therapies. This article presents a case study to illustrate side-effect management strategies for patients receiving MKIs for the treatment of advanced renal cell carcinoma.

Side Effects

Side effects of VEGF and MKIs may interfere with a patient’s ability to complete a treatment regimen. The most common side effects associated with sunitinib are fatigue, diarrhea, and nausea (see Table 1). For patients receiving sunitinib, side effects and laboratory panels should be assessed at the end of each four-week course of therapy to ensure that the patient is able to tolerate the adverse events (see Table 2). For patients with metastatic renal cancer, the most common side effects of bevacizumab include hypertension, proteinuria, hemorrhage, and acute renal failure.

Nurses play a critical role in evaluating and managing the side effects, which can have a direct impact on patient outcomes. Management strategies that maximize tolerability and adherence...