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Early Implementation of Chemotherapy Education for Oncology Patients

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ABSTRACT

Patients with cancer often experience anxiety, uncertainty, and difficulty retaining essential information related to their diagnosis and treatment. The diagnosis and the unknown can make it difficult for patients to retain education given to them in the clinic or the hospital regarding chemotherapy treatment. In the hospital, patient education should be provided throughout the stay; however, it is mainly provided during the hospital discharge process. This project examines the effects of early implementation of continuous and customized patient education. Patients will receive a pre- and post-assessment of their understanding of the cancer diagnosis and chemotherapy treatment plan, helping staff customize education to the needs of the patient. Incorporating this educational system should decrease the patient's anxiety, improve patient satisfaction, and decrease the discharge nurse's workload.

PICO QUESTION

Does the implementation of an early patient education program that includes interprofessional collaboration on the oncology unit improve patient perception of discharge readiness and satisfaction?

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Readmissions are commonly related to lack of education and communication.[1]
- Lack of education contributes to increased healthcare costs, emergency room visits, readmissions, and distrust in the healthcare system.[2]
- Studies show structured education improves patient outcomes.[3]
- Beginning education at the time of admission improves retention of vital information.[4]

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

This master's project aims to decrease time spent educating patients on information they should have received in their clinics, filling knowledge deficits, and increasing their knowledge on their chemotherapy treatments, adverse effects, and safety at home. The project also aims to increase communication, decrease readmission rates, and improve patients' readiness for discharge. The purpose of the project is to focus patients' education on their personal needs.

Implementation

- Restructure of the chemotherapy education process
- Education for unit nurses and discharge nurse on the new process
- Pre- and post-assessment survey to be administered to patients for tailored education
- Education to start at admission and to focus on pre-assessment survey answers
- Discharge education to focus on knowledge deficits identified in post-assessment survey

National Cancer Institute (NIH) (2001). Nurse educating patient. Retrieved from https://visualsonline.cancer.gov/details.cfm?imageid=2515

National Cancer Institute (NIH) (2006). Doctor speaks to patient. Retrieved from https://visualsonline.cancer.gov/details.cfm?imageid=4217

Evaluation of Project

- Time of patient education to be measured during the discharge process
- Patient satisfaction to be assessed at the discharge process using the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare and Systems (HCAHPS) [3] scores

Upon reviewing these items, the expected outcomes include that the time of discharge education has decreased and patient satisfaction has increased. If these outcomes are achieved, then the project will be considered an improvement compared to the current admission and discharge process.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Adult patients require certain conditions to effectively retain information during stressful and anxiety-induced times. They also do not want to be re-educated on subjects they may know. The Adult Learning Theory by Knowles[5] is based on the premise that nurses must consider the preparation for education and factor the stress of hospitalization. By assessing the patient's knowledge, the nurse is able to tailor the patient's education to fill knowledge deficits and potentially improve retention of essential information.

CONCLUSIONS

As oncology care becomes more complex, it is essential to focus on patient and family education. This essential education for the patient and family remains critical for their care and allows them to become successful participants in their care. Repetition of education, as well as tailored education, is essential for patient's to retain critical information as they may be experiencing feelings of anxiety while being overwhelmed with information overload. The project aims include

- Decrease discharge nurse workload
- Improve patient understanding of vital education
- Increase patient satisfaction
- Support nurse-patient communication
- Promote patient safety

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