

6th World Nursing and Healthcare Conference

August 15-17, 2016 London, UK

Proactive approach: Developing and implementing guidelines for treating patients with orally-administered anti-cancer drugs (OAACD) in the home care setting: Experience of a comprehensive cancer center

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Introduction: The ongoing trend of using orally-administered instead of intravenously-administered anti-cancer drugs improves patients' quality-of-life and reduces costs. However, as this trend facilitates transition of patients to the home-care setting, issues such as adherence, patient monitoring, and addressing adverse events (AEs), become more challenging. Thus, this trend requires remodeling patient care and the communication between the ambulatory care staff and the patients.

Objectives: To describe the development and implementation of guidelines related to the treatment of cancer patients with orally-administered drugs in a comprehensive cancer center.

Methods: Guideline development included several steps such as performing a literature review identifying safety issues, evaluating the number of patients treated with orally-administered drugs, developing patient capabilities assessment tool, and creating relevant documents (E.g., information and contacts orders for each treatment and checklists/follow up sheets for the staff).

Results: Guidelines were developed and implemented among 2013-2014. At present, the ambulatory care nurses proactively monitor the treatment of approximately 70 patients (per week), who are being treated at home. The monitoring is performed by phone/email/meetings, and includes confirming appropriate drug handling and administration (E.g., issues related to storage, dosage, drug-drug and drug-food interactions), follow-up on blood tests, symptoms assessment, and hospitalization, if needed. Guidelines adoption by staff members improved patients' adherence and decreased the rates of AEs (E.g., renal failure) and hospitalizations (will be presented).

Conclusions: Proactive approach by developing and implementing guidelines for managing patients treated with OOACD was associated with improved patient care and represents the commitment of the oncology staff to patients' quality-of-life and safety.

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