


The nurse in the university outpatient context of chemotherapy: A practice approach

 <https://doi.org/10.56238/sevened2024.012-027>

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nursing plays a vital role in the care of cancer patients, offering comprehensive support from diagnosis to treatment and rehabilitation. Understanding how the nurse works in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic helps to identify areas where treatment can be improved. **Objective:** To disseminate the experience of good practices, the promotion of humanization in care, the continuous training of professionals, the encouragement of research and innovation, and the strengthening of the professional support network. **Methodology:** This is a descriptive study of the experience report type of nurses in the university oncology outpatient clinic. **Development:** The chemotherapy outpatient clinic is located in a university hospital. The nursing team is composed of nurses, nursing technicians and nursing assistants. The activities performed by the nursing team in the chemotherapy room are: reception of patients, preparation of premedications, referral of medical prescriptions to the pharmacy, checking of medications after manipulation by the pharmacist, puncture of peripheral venous accesses and/or activation of central venous accesses, and monitoring of patients. In addition, nurses perform the role of team leadership and perform routine bureaucratic activities inherent to their position. In summary, the work of nurses in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic is characterized by a set of complex and interdisciplinary practices, which aim at excellence in cancer care, as well as the dissemination of knowledge among university students who carry out their undergraduate and graduate internships there. **Final considerations:** The practice of working in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic highlights the importance of the role of nursing in the comprehensive care of cancer patients. The dedication, technical knowledge and sensitivity of nurses are essential to provide quality care. Through welcoming, education, follow-up and rehabilitation, the nursing team contributes significantly to the well-being of patients.

Keywords: Nursing Team, Chemotherapy, Oncology.

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing plays a vital role in the care of cancer patients, offering comprehensive support from diagnosis to treatment and rehabilitation (IPC, 2024). The high incidence of cancer in developed and developing countries and the use of chemotherapy and biological therapy have an impact and, therefore, concern about the quality of life of these people (COELHO *et. al.*, 2017).

Adverse events such as nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, hair loss, insomnia, among others, are common in intravenous chemotherapy treatments (VIANA, 2023). These are associated with fears and stigmas, and with the concept of proximity and finitude of life and are directly associated with pain and suffering, resulting in changes in the lives of patients who are often unaware of the benefits and purposes of treatment and how they can influence their biopsychosocial context (MORTOLA, 2021).

The practice of care can be influenced by the emotions, attitudes, values and beliefs of cancer patients and their families, so nurses should use theoretical, practical and scientific knowledge to offer the best possible support. The main function of nursing is to care for and educate patients and their families, a challenging but essential task to support and guide the progression, treatment, and recovery of the disease, impacting patients' quality of life (CARMO, *et al.*, 2019).

Luz *et al.* (2016) emphasize the importance of the nursing team in cancer care, as nurses are in constant contact with patients and their families, facing situations of suffering, hardship, and death.

Thus, this article reports the experience of nurses in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic, highlighting the challenges and strategies adopted to ensure humanized and effective care.

Understanding how the nurse works in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic helps to identify areas where treatment can be improved to minimize side effects and maximize therapeutic benefits. This study will contribute to nursing, reflecting on the improvement of care and the degree of satisfaction of the professional.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this experience report includes the dissemination of good practices, the promotion of humanization in care, the continuous training of professionals, the encouragement of research and innovation, and the strengthening of the professional support network. By sharing these experiences, nurses contribute significantly to the advancement of nursing practice and to the improvement of care provided to patients with breast cancer.



METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research of the nurses' experience report type, whose purpose was to describe the performance of nurses in the university chemotherapy outpatient clinic with a focus on the quality of care provided to the user.

This type of article describes the experience of nursing and can contribute in a relevant way to this area of activity, with the purpose of socializing an experience, raising debate and enabling reflections on important stages of the care process.

DEVELOPMENT

The chemotherapy outpatient clinic is located in a university hospital, offering multidisciplinary care focused on the treatment and follow-up of patients with breast cancer. The nursing team consists of nurses specialized in oncology, nursing technicians, and nursing assistants, who work in collaboration with physicians, psychologists, nutritionists, and social workers.

On the first contact with the outpatient clinic, patients are received by the nurse in the chemotherapy room after a specialized medical consultation. At this time, they receive a diagnosis of their disease and are told about the type of treatment needed, which may include antineoplastic chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted or biologic therapy, hormone therapy, or surgery. These treatments can also be combined. If chemotherapy treatment has been determined, the patient is referred to the infusion room.

In the infusion room, the nurse receives the patient with cordiality, guiding him about bureaucratic issues and elucidating the flow of care. In addition, the nurse is responsible for scheduling the infusion date. There is also the possibility of infusion on demand, allowing the treatment to start immediately, on the same day of the first visit.

It is observed that patients often arrive apprehensive and with insufficient information. Thus, it is essential for nurses to clarify the flow of care and the possible side effects of medications, which vary according to the type of chemotherapy. Thus, it is essential to provide individualized care in order to provide specific guidance.

Due to the high daily demand of patients, welcoming all users is a constant challenge. In general, patients who are starting antineoplastic therapy have numerous doubts about nutrition, their rights, and the diagnosis itself.

The professional practice of nurses in the chemotherapy infusion room demands rigorous attention and in-depth knowledge. Each patient's chemotherapy prescription is sent to the pharmacy, where, after manipulation, the medication, accompanied by the medical prescription, is returned to the nurse in the infusion room. This professional carries out a meticulous check to ensure that the



medication and dosage are correct. After this conference, the medication is administered to the patients.

The activities performed by the nursing team in the chemotherapy room are: welcoming patients, preparing premedications, forwarding the medical prescription to the pharmacy, checking medications after manipulation by the pharmacist, puncture of peripheral venous accesses and/or activation of central venous accesses, such as PICC and Port-a-Cath, and monitoring of patients. In addition, nurses perform the role of team leadership and perform routine bureaucratic activities inherent to their position.

During the period in which the patient remains in the room, the nurse maintains constant vigilance, closely monitoring the conditions of the peripheral access and assessing the patient's tolerance medication. In case of any adverse event, the nurse intervenes promptly and calls the doctor as needed.

Another aspect of paramount importance in the work of nurses in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic is health education. This professional provides detailed guidance to patients and their families on the necessary care at home, the side effects resulting from chemotherapy, and preventive and symptom control measures. Such educational support is essential for effective continuity of treatment and for the promotion of patient autonomy.

In summary, the work of nurses in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic is characterized by a set of complex and interdisciplinary practices, which aim at excellence in cancer care, as well as the dissemination of knowledge among university students who carry out their undergraduate and graduate internships there.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The work of nurses in the chemotherapy outpatient clinic presents several challenges, including the need to deal with difficult diagnoses, manage the adverse effects of treatments, and provide constant emotional support. However, the experience has been extremely enriching for the nurses, with regard to the development of technical and interpersonal skills, learning to work as a team and making them able to deal with complex emotional situations.

The practice of working in the university chemotherapy outpatient clinic highlights the importance of the role of nursing in the comprehensive care of cancer patients. The dedication, technical knowledge and sensitivity of nurses are essential to provide quality, humanized and effective care. Through welcoming, education, follow-up and rehabilitation, the nursing team contributes significantly to the patients' journey of healing and well-being.



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