

Nurses Overcoming Educational Challenges with Caregivers of Pediatric Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant Patients

Sandra Marconi, RN

Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital
Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center



Introduction

Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) is an intense and complicated procedure that requires comprehensive education of the child, donor, and parents/caregivers. The nurses' challenge is to teach parents/caregivers safe and efficient care for their child. Nurses need to identify knowledge deficit and social situations that would hinder or prevent the caregivers from reaching this goal. The Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital Pediatric Stem Cell Transplant Patient Care Guidelines binder was written and a DVD was produced to effectively educate these families.

Tool Development

The expansion of the HSCT program at PSHCH meant we were performing high risk transplants with an increased risk of complications. A more comprehensive teaching tool was needed to ensure that caregivers were competent to provide necessary medical care. To update the information, a literature and Internet search was conducted. This information was verified with the program's physicians. A stem cell transplant glossary, abbreviations, and metric conversion sections were added. Also included were dietary guidelines. After viewing an educational DVD from another SCT program, our team recognized the importance of providing audio-visual educational tools. Our program applied for and received a grant from Four Diamonds to finance the production of an educational DVD. A professional production team and actress were hired. The DVD is now available for patients and caregivers.



Implementation

The family receives the educational materials, DVD, and guidelines binder when they come to the Pediatric Stem Cell Transplant (PSCT) clinic for the first consult. In addition, they receive either the book "Bone Marrow and Blood Stem Cell Transplants: A Guide for Patients" or "Autologous Stem Cell Transplants: A Handbook for Patients." Contents are reviewed with the family, who are encouraged to bring the binder with them to each clinic visit and to the hospital when admitted. Medication sheets from Lexi-comp are printed and given to the family. With each clinic visit, the educational material is reviewed and reinforced.

Outcomes

HSCT education is individualized and ongoing with continual evaluation of understanding and comprehension. Once the child is admitted, inpatient nurses continue the HSCT education. This educational process continues after discharge in the PSCT clinic.

Patients and caregivers have verbalized that they are effectively educated to care for the patients with the teaching tools provided. The Adult Stem Cell Transplant program has adapted our binder for their patients. Caregivers are calling and reporting any signs or symptoms of problems. A comprehensive medication list has been developed and updated for them with each clinic visit. The caregivers have successfully accepted the challenge to learn to provide safe and efficient care for these medically complex children.

