Procedure of safe handling with cytostatic drugs*

KEYWORDS: Medical Oncology; Drug Delivery Systems; Safety; Antineoplastic Agents; Occupational Exposure

Working group for safe handling with cytostatic drugs has been formed by the Ministry of Health, and it consists of professionals from IORS, Federal Bureau of Weights and Measures, Industrial Medicine, Institute of Hematology, Military Medical Academy, and Crown Agents. The aim of this working group is to prepare procedures for safe handling with cytostatic drugs, as well as program for educational seminar for nurses, medical technicians, and pharmaceutical technicians. The procedures will serve as a guide of good practice of oncology health care, and will refer to all actions that health care professionals carry out from the moment of drugs arrival to the pharmacy to the moment of their application. In the first segment of this procedure, general rules are given for working with cytotoxic agents, control for risky exposures, safe system of work, control of working environment, monitoring of the employees' health condition, adequate protection in the working environment, protective equipment of the employees (gloves, mask, cap, eyeglasses, shoe covers, coats and chambers for vertical laminar air stream). Storing of cytostatics, procedure in case of accident, and waste handling and removal are also described in this segment. Fifty-three standard operational procedures are described in detail in the second segment. Training scheme for preparation of chemotherapy is given in the third segment - education related to various fields and practical part, which would be carried out through workshops, and at the end of the course participants would pass a test and obtain certificate. After the procedures for safe handling with cytostatics are legally regulated, employer will have to provide minimum of protective equipment, special rooms for the drugs dissolving, chambers with laminar airflow, 6 hours working time, rotation of the staff working with drugs dissolving in intervals of every five years, higher efficiency, better health control. In conclusion, this specific field of work requires great psychological and physical efforts, and know-how. When taking care of ourselves, we are taking care of the others, as well.

*In coordination with Ministry of Health of Republic of Serbia

Our experience in education of patients within the first session "Human body and cancer" of European education program "Learning to live with cancer"

KEYWORDS: Patient Education; Oncologic Nursing; Health Education; Medical Oncology

Background: As a part of educational team within the European Educational Program (EEP), senior nurse should give clear and understandable information to the patients about the functioning of the human body, tissues and cells, and increase their knowledge about the cancer. Senior nurse also has to get them acquainted with the medical terminology. The aim of this research was to assess how participants was satisfied with the information they had been given either orally, or in written form within the first session of the EEP.

Methodology: Thirty-seven patients and their family members were entered in this research. They were divided in two groups, which were investigated separately, on December 2002, and on May 2003 at the Department for Educational Activities. For the purpose of this investigation an anonymous questionnaire and the original evaluation list from the EEP as an assessment instrument, were used.

Results: Seventy percent of the participants assessed the first session as very good, while the remaining 30% scored the session as excellent. All participants understand information they had been given, and 97% of them claimed they had learned something they had not used to know. As far as printed material was concerned, 73% of the participants evaluated this material as being very good, and 24% of all included persons, as being excellent.

Conclusion: Our results confirmed that the first session "Human body and cancer" of EEP Learning to live with cancer meet the patients' and their family members' expectation concerning getting clear information on this subject.

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