The influence of patients' education on quality of life - a single center experience

Keywords: Patient Education; Quality of Life; Medical Oncology

Background: Since 1998 an individual approach in patient's education has been applied at the Institute for Oncology and radiology of Serbia (IORS). Until now about 2500 patients have been informed and advised about the disease they were suffering from. Furthermore, education of patients and their family members is also ongoing at the IORS within European Education Program (EEP) “Learning to live with cancer”. This program is based on popular lectures requiring multidisciplinary team consisting of physician, senior nurse, psychologist, nutritionist, defecologist, and social worker. At the IORS, more than 3000 patients were included in this work in groups within EEP. The aim of this research was to evaluate the influence of patients' education on quality of life (QoL).

Patients and methods: A hundred and five individuals were divided into three groups of study subjects: experimental cancer patients group (n=35), control cancer patients group (n=35) (who did not have organized education), and control healthy persons group (n=35). All three groups were matched regarding gender, age and education level. The Rotterdam Symptom Check list was used for the assessment of QoL.

Results: We found high correlation between the level of getting informed and total quality of life (r=0.330), physical dimension of quality of life (r=0.233) and poor correlation with psychic dimension of quality of life (r=0.215). All measures of QoL were significantly better in experimental patients' group than in control patients' group: physical dimensions (p<0.01), psychic dimension (p<0.01), functional ability (p<0.01), and total QoL (p<0.01).

Conclusion: Education significantly improves the quality of life in cancer patients. It seems to be a powerful weapon against the disease, and should be incorporated as an integral part of treatment plan.

The importance of continual education in the process of integration of young nurses

Keywords: Education, Nursing, Continuing; Medical Oncology

Background: Duty of a nurse-manager is to realize importance of integration of newly employed nurse for forming coherent, unique and efficacious team. Integration of newly employed nurses, especially those without working experience, includes acceptance of standards that have been already accepted by other employees. The aim of this investigation was to show the importance of integration, in the first place the education for further professional improvement of young nurses.

Methodology: Each year, in September/October the Educatice Program (EP) for young nurses is organized at the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia. The program consists of 24 hours of theoretical lectures, and of 28 hours of practical training. At the beginning and at end of EP, the written test for knowledge checking is obligatory for all participants.

Results: From September 2001 till June 2002, a group of twenty-two young nurses with no working experience were employed on a full-time basis at the Institute for Oncology and Radiology of Serbia. The median age was 22 years (range: 20-24yrs). Sixteen of them (73%) started attending the EP during 2002/2003. At the end of course all of them passes the written exam (half of attendees showed excellent results).

Conclusion: Integration of young nurses mainly depends on the organization of continual education - the activity that has to become an obligation in all health institutions.