Chemotherapy Oral Adherence

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Nurses Are Vital to Improved Patient Outcomes

- Educating the patients!!!

- Patients learn best with nursing education.
Vital Findings in the Evidence: How to Improve Compliance

- For a nurse to ask: “Are you remembering to take the medication?”
- For a phone call to be made to the patient within 2 weeks of starting the new drug.
- Most Important thing: Patients understand the importance of the drug.
- Complex regimens: Spread sheet
Important Evidence Regarding Oral Adherence Success

- Can the patient/family read the medication bottle?
- Drug Boxes
- Medication Diaries
- Who is dispensing the drugs at home?
- Financial Issues: Is cost an issue?
- Nurses to ask: “Are you remembering to take your medication.”
- Reminder prompts are good such as: alarms on phones/oven/clocks/text messages.
- Clear Communication is absolute.
- Booklets, handouts, and/or taped recordings are excellent during the teaching sessions.
Nursing Pointers for improved oral medication adherence.

- **Side Effect Control**
- If a patient BELIEVES they can control the events in their life they have a better adherence to a medical regimen.
- Important for staff to assess the patients' status at each lab/clinic visit. This includes how their medications are going and if there are any social issues.
- Patients’ participation in the treatment decision is key, along with education.
- Patients need to VALUE WHY this medication is necessary.
- Collaborative Dialogue with oncology nurses is imperative.
Social issues do have an affect.

- If a patient is having social or economical issues this makes them at a higher risk for poor compliance.
- Does the patient live alone?
- Is there a family member that would be helpful when giving new information?
- Does this person have other co-morbidities that require medicine? If so, then it is important to remember the greater the medication complexity, the less likely the older adults adhere to the medication regimen.
- Older age > 65 decreased compliance.
Quality of Life

- If socioeconomic status is low then they could use a call every 2 weeks.
- If the patients Quality of Life is low, they need nursing calls every 2 weeks.
Safety Issues

- Nurses should go over: storage, disposal, safe handling, (gloves, wash hands, protecting patient/caregivers and environment).
- Do not crush or open pills, capsules because of risk of inhalation of dust particles form the medications.
- Does the patient/family understand the directions for taking the medications?
- Do they understand the drug bottle directions?
- Safe Sex.
Key Assessment Questions:

What have you been told about this treatment plan with oral medications?

What other medications or pills do you take by mouth?

Are you able to swallow pills or tablets? If no, explain.

Are you able to read the drug label/information?

Are you able to open your other medicine bottles or packages?

Have you taken other pills for your cancer?

Are you experiencing any symptoms with that would affect your ability to keep down the pills, for example nausea or vomiting?

How will you fill your prescription?

Have you had any problems with your insurance that has interfered with our obtaining your medications?

Who should we call with questions? Name and phone number.
Patient Education:

Inform any other doctors, dentists or healthcare providers that you are taking pills/tablets for your cancer.

Keep the pills/tablets away from children and pets and in a child proof container.

Keep the pills/tablets in the original container, unless otherwise directed. It could be dangerous to mix with other pills.

Wash your hands before and after handling the pills/tablets.

Do not crush, chew, cut or disrupt your pills/tablets unless directed otherwise.

Store your pills/tablets away from heat, sunlight, or moisture as it may degrade the pills/tablets, potentially making them less effective.

Have a system to make sure you take your pills /tablets correctly.
Make sure you have directions about what to do if you miss a dose.

If you accidentally take too many pills or if someone else takes your pills/tablets call the Doctor or Nurse Immediately.

Ask your nurse what to do with any pills/tablets you have not taken or are outdated.

Carry with you a list of medicines that you are taking, including your cancer pills/tablets.

Let us know if you have a problem with paying for or getting your pills.

Plan ahead for travel, refills and weekends.