Title:
Developing and Validating a Problem-Solving Tool for Caregivers to Manage Antineoplastic Treatment for Family Members

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Global Management of Chronic Conditions
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Keywords:
caregivers, problem-solving and tool validation

References:


Abstract Summary:
This study showed how to develop and validate an educational tool to help family caregivers manage and resolve problems linked to the administration of oral antineoplastic therapy. This tool increased caregivers’ level of confidence and contributed to reducing errors and improving patient safety.

Learning Activity:

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<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>The learner will be able to design and implement a process for the validation of therapeutic education tool for caregivers of cancer patients.</td>
<td>This study provides and practical example of how a new tool can be successfully developed by experts and then validated thanks to the active involvement of its end-users, who in this case are the caregivers themselves. This</td>
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The process can also improve patients’ adherence to treatment and its outcomes both for patients and their family caregivers.

The learner will be able to use qualitative research method for the development and validation of a new tool for caregivers.

The caregivers were actively involved by using a short interview asking if they were satisfied with what was written on each card and if the pictures and illustrations on each were appropriate. Not just words, but also pictures have a significant psychological impact on caregivers who often suffer from physical and emotional burnout.

Abstract Text:

Purpose:

To develop and validate an educational tool consisting of a deck of cards for caregivers to educate them to autonomously and safely manage biological antineoplastic oral therapy for their family members at home. This will also increase patients’ adherence to treatment.

Methods:

We started from the definition of ‘self-management’ coined by Corbin & Strauss (1988): ‘Self-management aims at helping patients to maintain a wellness in their foreground perspective’ (Lorig & Holman 2003, p. 1). Therefore, self-management is based on the perception patients have about problems linked to their conditions. This led us to choose a method based on the theory of problem-based learning, such as the Barrows Cards (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1977), and applied it to patients with the purpose of improving self-management through therapeutic education.

The Barrows Cards were originally used to test decision-making skills and critical thinking in medical students. This method—also known as the ‘Portable Patient Problem Pack’ or simply P4 System—uses a situational card that describes a complex problem and learners can choose from a deck of at least 15 cards each of which describes a possible solution to that problem with the support of a picture.

Two focus groups with a group of 12 oncologists and cancer nurses were conducted at our Teaching Hospital in Genoa to define the themes to include in the cards. Also the nursing diaries of the last six months of nurses directly caring for cancer patients were included in the study. The 15 cards were then tested on 18 caregivers to verify if the contents (terminology and pictures) on the cards were clear and appropriate.

The instrument development process included the following steps: 1) A review of the literature to retrieve scientific evidence to support the purpose of our study; 2) Obtaining support and advice from 12 cancer experts; 3) Checking the nursing records diaries of the last six months; 4) Obtaining feedback from caregivers on the clarity of the statement provided on each card and on the appropriateness of the picture that illustrates the statement.

Results:
At the end of this study, all of the 18 caregivers were satisfied with the deck of 15 cards, plus a situational card initially developed by our cancer experts. On the cards, caregivers preferred to include photographs rather than drawn illustrations. This qualitative process enabled to validate the cards for caregivers.

**Conclusion:**

The lack of adherence to therapy not only reduces the effectiveness of therapeutic treatment but incorrect management of the therapy can also lead to adverse events. Therefore, at home caregivers play an important role in ensuring that the people they care for correctly adhere to the treatment prescribed, and yet the importance of their role is neglected. It is important for nurses to provide caregivers with structured education interventions to help them manage treatment and monitor adverse effects in a more confident manner. This will improve adherence to treatment and outcomes both for patients and their caregivers, who will feel more confident and less burdened by the fear of making mistakes. However, more work will be needed to confirm this.