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Enhancing Quality of Life of Cancer Survivors: Incorporating Survivorship Care Plan in Nursing Education

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Introduction: This number of cancer survivors is expected to rise to up to 18 million by 2022. The large number of cancer survivors and the long periods of survivorship pose challenge to the current health system in advancing quality transition care (McCabe et al., 2013). Cancer survivors are at higher risk for morbidity and premature mortality associated directly to the cancer itself, pre-existing morbidities, and to exposure to therapy. During the transition from active treatment to post-treatment care, cancer survivors may be left lacking the knowledge, resources, or skills that are necessary to manage the long-term effects of their disease and treatment (Hauken et al., 2015; Irwin et al., 2011). In order to reduce the challenges of cancer survivorship, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends the use of survivorship care plan (SCP). SCP can help coordinate clinicians to manage long-term survivorship care (Salz et al., 2012). Nurses are on the front line of patient care and promoting health and disease prevention are their top priorities. It is of utmost importance that nurses who provide survivorship care enhance their knowledge and skills and advocate for and identify new ways to meet the needs of survivors as these are crucial in the care, research, and program development (Grant et al., 2012). Purpose: The purpose of this project is to propose an evidence-based educational plan to incorporate the concept and framework of the Survivorship Care Plan in the nursing education curriculum. Method: A literature review was conducted that supported the use of survivorship care plans and tailored education along with the creation of a multidisciplinary team that will help ensure maintenance of the plan in the healthcare organization. The concept and framework of Survivorship Care Plan, elements of SCP, and current evidence-based practice of survivorship care plan will be introduced in the nursing courses. We propose these contents are incorporated in the Medical-Surgical Nursing courses for undergraduate nursing students and in the Advanced Pathophysiology courses for graduate nursing students. The educational strategies will include a brief lecture, review of best practices, and discussion with a case study. We aim to implement the educational plan in 2018. Evaluation: Evaluation method will include a quiz and a clinical observation journal. Implication: Over the past several decades the number of cancer survivors has increased considerably as a result of improved early detection of first malignancies and effective therapies (McCabe et al., 2013). Cancer survivorship care has emerged as a significant component of oncology care. A quality transition care can optimize the quality of life of cancer survivors. It is imperative to incorporate the concept and current evidence of Survivorship Care Plan in the early stage of nursing education so we can prepare the future nursing workforce in cancer care.

Title:
Enhancing Quality of Life of Cancer Survivors: Incorporating Survivorship Care Plan in Nursing Education

Applicable category:
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Cancer care, Nursing Education and Survivorship Care Plan

References:


Abstract Summary:
Survivorship care plan has been recommended as the essential tool to guide the management of cancer care. An evidence-based educational plan is proposed to incorporate the concept and framework of the Survivorship Care Plan in nursing education curriculum.

Content Outline:
I. Introduction
A. The large number of survivors and the long periods of survivorship pose challenge to the current health system in advancing quality transition care.

B. Survivorship care plan has been recommended as the essential tool to guide the management of cancer survivors who have various cancer types across an age spectrum that continue to change over time during and after active treatment of cancer.

II. Body
A. Main point #1 The use of survivorship care plans and tailored education along with the creation of a multidisciplinary team that will help ensure maintenance of the plan across the continuum.

1. Supporting points.
   a) Survivors can share their SCP with their primary care provider to support coordinated continuing care (Salz et al., 2012).
   b) Oncology clinicians report that SCP’s aid in reducing the anxiety in cancer survivors and improving communication between patient and providers (Salz et al., 2012). Most importantly, quality of life will improve for patients who are knowledgeable about what to expect in the future and how to pursue and manage their ongoing care (Salz et al., 2012).

B. Main Point #2 Introducing the Survivorship care plan framework and education curriculum into nursing education curricula can help improve patients’ quality of life and multidisciplinary communication.

1. Supporting points.
a) The implementation of the Survivorship care plan, clinicians, patients, and families will be empowered with knowledge and skills necessary for a quality transition care as be evidenced by the optimization of the quality of life of survivors.

b) Nurses are on the front line of patient care and promoting health and disease prevention are their top priorities. It is of utmost importance that nurses who provide survivorship care enhance their knowledge and skills and advocate for and identify new ways to meet the needs of survivors as these are crucial in the care, research, and program development.

III. Conclusion

A. Introducing the concept and framework of the Survivorship Care Plan in the nursing education curriculum can help prepare the future nursing workforce in cancer care.

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Author Summary: I have been a academic educator for 15 years. Currently I am teaching in the graduate program. I also had served as the chapter president of STTI and coordinator for ONS.