Nursing Implications: Managing Pain in the Geriatric Oncology Patient

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Objectives

• Describe nurses’ role in multidisciplinary comprehensive pain management

Nursing 101

• “Pain is whatever the patient says it is, whenever they say it is”
• 42% of older adult cancer patients report unrelieved pain
• Pain in the older adult is inadequately assessed, documented and managed


Nursing 101

• Nurses’ do not:
  – have a clear understanding of pain management principles
  – understand the aging process and implications for care

The Nurse

• Roles differ internationally
• Common duties include:
  – Perform pain assessment
  – Administer pain medications
  – Educate patient and their families
  – Implement non-pharmacologic interventions

Nursing 101

• Nursing barriers to pain management in the older adult
  – Fear of exacerbating co-morbid conditions
  – Perceived increased incidence of adverse effects
  – Addiction
  – Relying on self-report
  – Unclear understanding of:
    • pain management plan
    • cancer treatment plan
The Nurse

• Assessment
  – Inconsistent and inappropriate use of assessment tools
  – Unclear how to interpret results of assessment


• Documentation of pain and analgesic use decreases as the degree of cognitive impairment increases


The Nurse

• Administration of pain medication
  – Timing medications with potentially painful interventions
  – Knowledge deficit regarding efficacy and duration differences in routes of administration

The Teacher

• Realistic expectations and acceptable levels of pain essential
• Caregiver strain and negative attitudes can affect a patient's experience of pain
• Establishing open communication vital
• Provide reassurance and support


The Healer

• Non-pharmacologic interventions
• Nurses use simple pain relieving strategies without realizing it
  – Music
  – Distraction
• Healing touch
• Guided imagery


• Thank you