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POSTER

### Can a relative become a good health worker in managing the central venous catheter of the tumor patient? Experience of the Rizzoli Orthopaedic Institute (Italy)

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The chemotherapy unit for bone tumors is a ward of 12 beds in the department of musculo-skeletal tumors in the Rizzoli Orthopedic Institute \* Bologna, Italy. Only 5% of the patients in the center come from our region, the rest are from other regions or abroad. These patients are affected by osteosarcoma or Ewing's sarcoma of the extremities. In 80% of cases a long-term central venous catheter (CVC) is inserted not only to carry out cycles of chemotherapy in the hospital but also to perform repeated blood tests, intravenous therapies and transfusions needed at home. To ensure that treatment is really effective and at the same time safe, the parents of each patient are taught all the procedures to manage the CVC at home. This is to enable blood to be taken, and infusion, medication and heparinisation to be carried out. This is advantageous compared to putting these patients in the hands of the family doctor or peripheral health structures that are often not competent in the management of these devices. The nursing team, backed up by doctors, have designed their own training course to acquire the necessary know-how in order to teach people without specific skills some complex healthcare procedures. Subsequently, a training course was set up for relatives, which consists of a theoretical part and a practical one. For theory written and audiovisual material is used; for the practical lessons a small laboratory has been equipped with a professional dummy and the material needed for simulations. 52 patients entered in the study between June 1999 and June 2000. Infection rate decreased from 11.5% to 7.6%, malfunction from 38.4% to 23% and only 1.6% never used the CVC at home compared to 13.4% the year before. The analysis of results shows that the aims have been fulfilled.

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### The long and short of communication skills training: A qualitative evaluation and comparison of participant perceptions of two approaches to communication skills training

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**Introduction:** Good communication with patients with cancer is a vital aspect of care. By the year 2002 it will be a pre-condition of post-basic qualification that UK health professionals working with patients with cancer can demonstrate competence in communication with patients. Little however is known of the best approach to training to improve communication skills. A comparison of the effectiveness of two approaches to the delivery of communication skills training has been undertaken. Contact time (26 hours) and teaching methods were standardised for a three-day communication skills programme integrated over a period of 6 months into academic courses and a three-day course delivered on consecutive days. Aim: To provide a qualitative evaluation and direct comparison of participant perceptions of these two approaches. Method: Eight focus groups of between 8 and 12 participants representing the two different approaches to delivery were set up. A semi-structured topic guide was used to explore participants views of the negative and positive aspects of the courses. Each focus group encounter was audio-taped and tapes were transcribed and thematically analysed to generate an in-depth evaluation and comparison of perceptions. Results: 96 nurses participated in the focus groups. An overwhelmingly positive evaluation of both approaches was evident. The opportunity for participants to devise their own agenda, the pros and cons of role-play and optimum group size emerged as important aspects of both types of training. Comparison between participants perceptions of the different approaches is made. The findings are discussed in terms of their potential impact on designing future communication skills programmes to meet the needs of the participants.

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### An introduction to research programme for Greek cancer nurses. The participants evaluation

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**Purpose:** It is widely acknowledged across many European countries that nursing research in cancer care is in its infancy. Educational and professional organizations must respond by finding ways to enhance nurses' capacity to be involved in nursing research. This program has been developed out of that need.

The poster will present the development and evaluation of a nursing led program which aimed encourage nurses to develop a questioning approach to their work and engage a wider understanding approach of the importance of research as a basis for professional practice.

**Methods:** Using a collaborative approach a project group was established to develop and implement an "Introduction to research program under the auspices of the Hellenic Oncology Nursing Society together with a group of experts. The program was advertised through the Hellenic Association's Newsletter.

The 30 nurses who attended the 30 hours program offered in five hours formal sessions monthly (November 1999 to May 2000) in Athens, were given a self administered questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the programme.

**Results:** This research awareness program was very positively evaluated in respect to its scope, design and teachers. At the end nurses were more convinced of the importance of nursing research and its practical implication.

**Conclusion:** This program was very well appreciated by the Greek participants and has led to a second one through their suggestions to practice in smaller groups by developing small research projects.

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### Assessing fatigue in patients with lung cancer: perceptions of patients and healthcare professionals

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**Purpose:** The overall aim of the study is to gain a greater understanding of fatigue in patients with lung cancer undergoing radiotherapy and the healthcare professionals involved in their care. More specifically, to assess the nature, severity and intensity of fatigue in this group of patients and evaluate the effectiveness of self-care behaviours. At the same time to explore health professionals present knowledge of fatigue and experience of symptom management. This project stems from the findings of a recent survey conducted by the researchers to evaluate how nurses assess cancer related fatigue.

**Method:** A descriptive design was employed using a weekly diary for patients with lung cancer receiving radical and high dose palliative radiotherapy to complete during treatment and one month later. A total sample of 53 patients were recruited over a ten month period and a random sample of 11 were interviewed to further explore the symptom of fatigue. Healthcare professionals involved in the care of patients with lung cancer were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews.

**Results:** Data collection is now complete. Data has been entered on an Access data base and is currently being analysed by a statistician. Staff and patient interviews have been transcribed and will be analysed using content analysis.

**Conclusion:** It is well recognised within the literature that fatigue is a significant problem for patients with cancer. The results from this study will provide information about the extent of this symptom specific to patients receiving radiotherapy for lung cancer. In addition a working knowledge in the use of diaries in assessing fatigue has been gained.

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### Perception of fatigue in oncology patients. Health education

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**Overview:** Fatigue has been identified by patients with cancer as the major obstacle to normal functioning and a good quality of life. It is a nearly universal symptom in patients undergoing primary antineoplastic therapy or treatment with biologic response modifiers and is extremely common in populations with persistent or advanced disease.

Given the prevalence and impact of cancer-related fatigue, there have been remarkably few studies of the phenomenon. Its epidemiology has been poorly defined, and the variety of clinical presentations remains anecdotal. The existence of discrete fatigue syndromes linked with predisposing factors of potential etiologies has not been confirmed, and clinical trials to evaluate putative therapies for specific types of cancer-related fatigue are almost entirely lacking.

It is important to begin to characterize the phenomenon of cancer-related fatigue and offer guidelines for management.

**Objective:** To determine if the health education from nurses decreases the perception of fatigue in patients with digestive cancer.

**Settings and Subjects of Study:** Patients diagnosed of digestive cancer who are going to take treatment in the Catalan Oncology Institute.

**Design:** Experimental randomised study, lasting two years.

**Variables:** Fatigue level, health education, differences in the treatments, level of patient satisfaction about nurse intervention.

**Intervention:** Individualized and structured health education intervention to the case group. To the two groups we will take note about the treatments they have received which could affect to the fatigue level.

**Analysis:** Statistical, descriptive and analytic study of the acquired information. We will use statistical program SPSS 9.0

Our study tries to give tools to the oncology patient to manage the fatigue through individualized health education, counselling.

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### "Woman, cancer and therapies" training experience in planning improved reception of patients in a senology ward with the participation of a cancer patients' association

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The National Cancer Institute of Milan has been developing an information and assistance program for oncology patients, called the Ulysses Project.

This meaningful experience has given us the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the patients, who attended the courses, as an essential resource for evaluation and for gathering ideas in order to improve the services offered by our Institute.

These patients, after receiving information and assistance to help them to cope with their cancer disease, offered suggestions from their own experience on how to improve the relationship between the medical centre, the personnel and the patients. Some of them actively collaborate in training programmes for medical and nursing staff: 8 Workshops were held on 'Communication and the Cancer Patient' in two general hospitals in Lombardy. The patients participated in the final round table and described the attitudes and qualities that communications should have to be effective during the crisis provoked by the disease.

Subsequent to these courses, a training-organisation experiment was organized for the nursing staff of the senology ward at the National Cancer Institute. The Association 'Salute Donna' offered its assistance and actively participated in the work of the 'Woman, Cancer and Therapies' sessions that were held in April, May and June 2000.

Three new projects have been planned in this training setting for the reception of patients in the senology ward:-

1. Extension of the first reception interview to include psychological and emotional aspects as a fundamental aspect of the relationship between the hospitalised patient and the nurse; an information and assistance talk between patient and nurse the night before the operation and a phone call after discharge.

2. Organisation of weekly meeting to give information and general knowledge about the ward for the patients awaiting hospitalisation: this meeting should help to occupy the particularly anxious waiting period for the patients and facilitate their arrival in the ward.

3. Preparation of a booklet with information and instructions, to be given to the patient at the time of hospital reservation.

We think that it is very important and useful to involve patients and their associations in the improvement of the quality of training and assistance in oncology. The project is involving other four oncological wards during this year.

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### Cancer patients on the Internet. Who surf? Why and where?

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Personal computers and the Internet have revolutionised access to information (info) including treatment of cancer (c.). More than 50% of Danish households have a PC with Internet and PCs are freely available on our libraries. Still more patients seek info on the Internet – but about what, and why? To get answers we conducted an enquiry in our out-patient clinics, October 2000, using a questionnaire with open and closed questions. Many pts. were reluctant because they did not surf, but 471 patients filled in forms - 179 at FC and 292 at HUH. 163 of these pts. (35%) had sought info on the Internet. Females were more frequent surfers than males: 37% vs. 31%. Above average were pts. with: testicular c. (50%), breast c. (48%), colon c. (44%), and ovarian c. (42%) and below average were: lung c. (32%), head & neck c. (22%), and other gynecologic c. (18%). Younger age groups were above average surfers: 20–29 yrs. of age (59%), 30–39 yrs. (74%), 40–49 yrs. (43%), 50–59 yrs. (43%) and below: 60–69 yrs. (24%), 70–79 yrs. (8%) and 80+ yrs. (10%). What did surfers search? 'Causes of cancer': 72% of the pts. 'Info about therapy': 91% 'Side effects': 81% 'The prognosis': 77% 'Info on alternative (non-authorised) therapy': 59%. Only 40% felt they found what they searched. All surfing pts had visited Danish sites, 46% also foreign web-sites. The most frequently visited sites were those of the Danish Cancer Society (63% of the surfers) and 'Netdoctor' (40%). The Ministry of Health's web-site was only visited by 3% and 4% had visited sites on the other two Danish university hospitals, while nobody had visited our own web-site: [www.skaccd.org](http://www.skaccd.org). Two 'alternative therapy' web-sites had been visited by 6% and 2% of the surfers. Of those surfing abroad, 56% had visited USA, 28% Germany, 9% Sweden, 9% UK, 2% Canada, and 2% Italy. Examples: Medscape, CancerNet, VVT News, Lancet and BMJ.

**Commentary:** The Internet is a source of info but also a challenge to us as nurses and doctors. More than ever it is urgent to be frank and honest about diagnosis, prognosis and options of treatment. Knowledge oblige, so we all have to surf – regularly and systematically. Can we manage? Do we have time?

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POSTER

### I.V. Medication administration in a safe and effective way

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The chemotherapy treatments of haematology patients are becoming more and more intensive, depressing the bone marrow function of the patients to a great extent. The nursing tasks are therefore very much concentrated on the increasing number of medications, among these especially administration of antibiotics. In our ward we often have 50, 60, or 70 medication forms on our medicine board which have to be administered as infusions or injections 1–4 times each day and night.

We found that overviewing the large number of forms was becoming more and more difficult, and so was administering the medicine in a safe and secure way. Besides we needed a simple way to visualize the impact that medication tasks had on our available nursing resources. We therefore developed a system of 'Medication Administration Instruments' to improve on this fact. The instruments concern:

- Drug working form
- Drug instruction
- Drug number documentation

After taking the system into use we see less medication errors, and a much easier and quicker overview of the medication forms. Also that the rapidly increasing number of medications in our ward have been visualized in such a way that more nurses have been added to our ward.

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### Information needs of women with a recently diagnosed ovarian cancer

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**Introduction:** A cancer diagnosis is still, more than other diagnoses, strongly associated with feelings like anxiety and agony. This, in com-