

Robin Herman, MN, RN, AOCNS
Erika Gonzalez, MSN, RN, PHN, CNS

INTRODUCTION

Oral chemotherapy drugs have skyrocketed in development and usage in the Oncology patient population. As one of the largest county hospitals in the US we have a huge volume of patients who are prescribed oral chemo agents for their Cancer diagnosis.

BACKGROUND

Our cancer population is a mixed of multiple ethnicities, languages, lower socio economic and education levels. These variables add to a complexity of skills needed to teach our patients. We desperately needed an educational framework to educate this patient population on their oral Chemotherapy medications. The infusion clinic is where all RN's are chemo certified and are unable to take on this large education workload. Our attention turned to the Oncology Clinic Staff RN's and LVN's who worked with this patient population every day. Our goal was to have them administer this education information on a one to one patient need basis to provide the education needed to take the medication safely.

OBJECTIVES

A program was developed to provided critical information to the patient so they can administer their own oral Cancer medications in a safe manner with the knowledge to identify any issues in administration or side effects. Our Chemo certified RN's are to busy with IV infusions to add this extra educational component to their original workload. Our attention turned to the Clinic staff RN's and LVN's who worked in the Oncology clinic with this patient population every day. Our goal was to have them administer this education information on a one to one patient need basis.

PROCESS

An Oral chemotherapy class was given to the entire licensed Oncology clinic staff. It included an overview of all FDA approved oral chemo agents, administration requirements, side effect management and patient education skills. Once the education process was completed the Oncology CNS and Supervising Staff Nurse of the infusion clinic moved into the clinic area to provide clinic support to the nursing staff. We spent several clinic days working with the nursing clinic staff to develop a pathway to identify which patients are prescribed Oral chemotherapy agents and then set up RN visits for their education intervention. We then worked side by side with all staff during the patient education visit. Review of the oral medication, administration and side effects were the education points for the training.

LESSONS LEARNED

Our biggest obstacle was the Oncology clinic nursing staff. They were very resistant to taking on this project and it took a lot of encouragement and support to get them motivated. They did sign up to be clinic nurses with out a major interest in Oncology. This was apparent when over the last two years it was a battle to get them interested in taking on the project. We also had a hard time conveying the actual education information with education level and all languages spoken. The other issue was COVID. It did delay the project over a year. Providing complicated chemo administration information over the phone was another big challenge.

EVALUATION

After two years of training and updated training we are still experiencing the education project struggling. The nursing staff that were very resistant to participating in the project are still resistant to actively teaching the patients. We have 7 disease specific Oncology clinics and still only the breast clinic has gone live with the education program. There has been backlash to expanding to the other clinics because of COVID and short staffing. Once again, the nursing staff is asking for an education update to continue on with the project before we expand to the other oncology clinics. Our plan is to continue with encouragement and support to get them motivated to move on with actively providing the oral medication education to our other specialty oncology clinics. At this point in time we have provided education to 12 breast cancer patients. Once the next wave of covid is over and we are back to normal staffing and live patient visits our goal is to move on to the next oncology clinics to open the oral chemo class patient education program.

TEAM MEMBERS

Chairs: Robin Herman & Erika Gonzalez

Team Leaders : Justine Constantino, Patricia Marquez & Kevin Brady.

Team members: Susana Fierro, Starla Le Fridge-Wilson, Mary Ann Lumanog, Jessica Lin & Meng-Yu Huang.

Infusion Center Staff

