

EMIRATES ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

Document Title: EONS Cancer Pain Position Statement

Date Drafted: 26th December 2018

Date Approved by Committee: 5th June 2019

Purpose:

To optimise cancer pain screening, assessment and management practices by nurses in cancer care in the United Arab Emirates.

Background:

Pain, as a fifth vital sign in cancer patients, is one of the most important, costly, and terrifying symptoms of cancer and the most common factor negatively affecting quality of life in cancer patients ⁽¹⁻³⁾. The prevalence of pain among cancer patients is between 39 and 66.4% and increases in the last stages of the disease, especially when the lifespan of a patient in the late stages of cancer is increased by the development of new maintenance treatments. Cancer pain remains a serious challenge for cancer patients ^(4, 5). Cancer pain management (CPM) is one of the most important care dimensions in patients with various types and at various stages of the disease ⁽⁶⁾.

Since nurses, as members of the healthcare team, are the main contributors to managing cancer pain, their knowledge, attitudes, and skills are critical ⁽⁷⁾.

Oncology inpatient nurses also play a key role in providing care for cancer patients suffering from pain ^(8,9). Low awareness of nurses about cancer pain management decreases efficient nursing care and increases patient harm by unsafe care ⁽¹⁰⁾. Individual studies have shown that nurses' levels of knowledge about CPM are lower than the levels of other members of the care team ⁽¹¹⁻¹³⁾.

Whilst cancer pain management is complex, adhering to the key principles of routine pain screening, comprehensive assessment, evidence-based management and reassessment would do much to minimize the global burden of unrelieved cancer pain. Nurses play a key role in helping to minimize pain ⁽¹⁴⁾. Better pain outcomes are within our reach today if nurses enhance routine screening and assessments and provide patients with the best available evidenced based treatments.

Undertaking a comprehensive, multidimensional pain assessment (i.e. bio-psycho-socio-spiritual assessments) is made easier with the use of validated tools such as the Brief Pain

Inventory ^(15,16) or the hand scale (commonly used in low-income settings) ^(17, 18).

Assessment findings ought to guide the interdisciplinary team's development of an individualized and timely cancer pain management plan that includes effective evidence-based pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions.

Recognizing and managing the cancer pain management needs of a wide variety of populations is an important priority and requires additional considerations, such as children, adolescents and young adults ^(19 -21), older people, those with dementia or special needs, people living with other non-communicable diseases and cancer survivors ⁽²²⁾. Each of these populations may have unique and complex needs with regards to pain screening, assessment and management, alongside cancer-related needs.

Position Statement

The Emirates Oncology Nursing Society (EONS) is committed to supporting strategies that will improve the reduction of cancer pain in keeping with the patient's wishes and goals of care. The Society is committed to providing ongoing support, networking, interdisciplinary collaboration and educational opportunities to access and advance the knowledge and skills of cancer nurses in improving the management of cancer pain.

Strategy

We aim to:

- Include pain screening, assessment and management education as a priority for EONS Committee
- Include pain management education at all EONS events
- Develop and disseminate evidence based educational materials for nurses
- Collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to develop and implement or review policies and guidelines for the effective management of cancer pain
- Support and undertake independent and/or collaborative cancer pain research management with oncology nurses in the UAE
- Undertake surveys throughout the project to measure effectiveness of the project

Acknowledgments

ISNCC Board of Directors

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