Implementing Standardized Nurse-Led Education and Documentation During a Pre-Chemotherapy Visit

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Background
Providing patient education prior to the first day of cancer treatment prevents and reduces anxiety (Garcia, 2014). Introducing a pre-chemo clinic for patients at UW Medicine Valley Medical Center Infusion Center has improved patients' first infusion experiences, improved understanding, and reduced anxiety. At go-live, patients scheduled for a one-hour nurse visit received education on their treatment medications, duration, side effects, and other expectations of cancer therapy. Each nurse determined the content of each patient visit using standardized handouts. Since content varied by nurse, gaps in patient knowledge and understanding were identified. “Standardizing chemotherapy education processes can contribute to improved patient understanding and high patient and staff satisfaction (Dalby, Nesbitt, Frechette, Kennerley, Lacoursiere, & Buswell, 2013).”

Purpose
Standardized education and documentation were developed to reduce the variation in nurse content, and improve the patient experience at the first treatment visit.

Interventions
An electronic documentation template was developed to guide nurses providing pre-chemotherapy education. A standardized education script was developed following the content and format of the documentation template. Notebooks were provided with the script and pdf of the documentation template for use during patient education. Standardized handouts for the patient were still utilized. Ancillary departments, Oncology Doctors, and Oncology Nurse Managers were consulted on content of the script and documentation.

Evaluation
In a survey of Infusion Center Registered Nurses, 96% have observed improved outcomes during the patient’s first chemotherapy experience when they have participated in a pre-chemotherapy teach. Reduced anxiety was observed by 84% of nurses. Nurses (96%) feel that patients benefit from the Pre-Chemo teach, but 100% understand there is a benefit to providing education prior to their first appointment. Although only 80% of nurses surveyed have had the opportunity to provide standardized education to new patients, 96% report they have the tools necessary to complete a successful Pre-Chemo teach.

Discussion
Implementation of standardized education and documentation for pre-chemotherapy visits has improved patient outcome and reduced anxiety during the first chemotherapy treatment. Development of tools for nurses providing patient education improves nursing practice and improves the patient experience.