

Cancer-Related Fatigue: Evidence-Based Nursing Strategies

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Abstract:- Cancer-related fatigue (CRF) is a common and troubling symptom faced by individuals undergoing cancer treatment. Unlike typical fatigue, CRF does not improve with rest and severely diminishes the quality of life. This paper examines evidence-based nursing strategies to address CRF, focusing on assessment, intervention, and patient education. Through the use of holistic and multidisciplinary methods, nurses can effectively alleviate the effects of CRF, thereby enhancing patient outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

CRF impacts 70-100% of individuals during cancer treatment and may continue for months or years after treatment ends. It is marked by an intense feeling of exhaustion, decreased energy, and a lowered ability for physical or mental tasks. The causes of CRF are varied, encompassing biological, psychological, and social elements. Nurses are crucial in recognizing and managing CRF, making evidence-based approaches vital for clinical practice.

➤ *Understanding Cancer-Related Fatigue*

CRF develops from a mix of cancer itself, side effects of treatment, and the psychosocial stress related to the illness. Key factors include:

- *Inflammatory Processes:*
Increased cytokine levels can cause fatigue.
- *Anemia:*
Frequently seen in patients receiving chemotherapy.
- *Sleep Disturbances:*
Often worsened by pain, anxiety, or medication effects.
- *Psychological Factors:*
Depression and anxiety are strongly associated with fatigue.

➤ *Assessment of CRF*

Thorough assessment is fundamental to effective management. Evidence-based tools consist of:

- *The Brief Fatigue Inventory (BFI):*
Evaluates severity and influence on daily life.
- *The Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Fatigue (FACIT-F):*
Assesses physical, emotional, and functional wellness.
- *Patient Interviews:*
Offer insights into personal experiences and triggers.
- *Evidence-Based Nursing Strategies*
 - *Patient Education*
 - ✓ Inform patients about the characteristics of CRF and its anticipated progression.
 - ✓ Provide practical guidance on energy conservation strategies, such as prioritizing tasks and sharing responsibilities.
 - *Physical Activity*
 - ✓ Promote personalized exercise programs. Aerobic and resistance exercises have been shown to effectively reduce CRF.
 - ✓ Work with physical therapists to formulate tailored plans.
 - *Psychological Support*
 - ✓ Facilitate access to counseling or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) to manage emotional issues.
 - ✓ Encourage mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) practices.
 - *Nutritional Interventions*
 - ✓ Tackle malnutrition and dehydration, which frequently contribute to fatigue.
 - ✓ Engage dietitians to develop tailored, balanced meal plans for patients.
 - *Pharmacological Approaches*
 - ✓ Administer erythropoiesis-stimulating agents for fatigue linked to anemia, when suitable.

- ✓ Evaluate the use of psychostimulants or corticosteroids in resistant cases, following oncology guidelines.

- *Complementary Therapies*

- ✓ Incorporate acupuncture, massage therapy, or yoga, which have effectively relieved CRF.
- ✓ Honor patient preferences and cultural factors when suggesting alternative treatments.

- *Multidisciplinary Collaboration*

Effectively managing CRF requires teamwork among healthcare providers, including oncologists, physical therapists, dietitians, and mental health experts. Regular team meetings can promote coordinated and thorough care.

- *Challenges in Managing CRF*

Obstacles to effective management include patients' underreporting, the absence of standardized protocols, and insufficient resources in specific environments. Overcoming these issues through education and advocacy is essential.

II. CONCLUSION

CRF is a multifaceted and debilitating condition that necessitates diverse interventions. Evidence-based nursing strategies encompassing education, physical activity, psychological support, and complementary therapies provide actionable solutions for alleviating CRF. By employing a patient-centered and multidisciplinary strategy, nurses can profoundly enhance the quality of life for those suffering from cancer-related fatigue.

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