

# A Project for Improving the Implementation Rate of Side Effect Assessment for Patients Receiving Chemotherapy for the First Time

Ru-Yi Wang, Ming-Ying Hong

Department of Nursing, National Taiwan University Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan



## INTRODUCTION

Many patients refuse the treatment due to fear of the side effects of chemotherapy, and some other patients cannot tolerate the side effects of chemotherapy and interrupt treatment, or even turn to alternative treatments such as folk therapy, resulting in poor treatment results and decreased survival rates. It was found by the researcher conducting a survey that the implementation rate of side effect assessment for patients who receive chemotherapy for the first time by case managers was only 70.7%. The reasons included:

- (1) The case managers were unclear about the routine process of follow-up visits.
- (2) There was no active reminder function in the information system, so it is easy to omit the assessment.
- (3) There was a lack of a standard operating procedure for chemotherapy side effect assessment.
- (4) There was no auditing mechanism.

## OBJECTIVE

The project aims to improve the implementation rate of side effect assessment by case managers for patients receiving chemotherapy for the first time. The goal is that case managers can assess the severity of side effects within two weeks after patients receive anticancer drugs for the first time, provide relevant nursing health education, and give individual guidance on side effect management to reduce patients' refusal or interruption of treatment due to side effects, so that patients can successfully complete their treatment, and the quality of care can be improved.

## METHODS

After analyzing the problems, the project team developed an improvement plan that included: integrating the information system with the addition of reminder and monitoring mechanisms, establishing a standard operating procedure for chemotherapy side effect assessment for cancer patients, reviewing and revising the contents of the routine procedure for follow-up visits, and conducting in-service training and awareness sessions. The implementation schedule is shown in Table 1.

## RESULTS

After the implementation of the project, the implementation rate of chemotherapy side effect assessment by case managers increased from 70.7% to 92.1%, which achieved the project goal.

**Table 1. Project schedule for improving the implementation rate of side effect assessment for patients undergoing chemotherapy for the first time**

Work projects	year month	2021						2022				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7-9	10-12	1	2	
<b>(I) \ planning period</b>												
1. Review and revise the routine content of follow-up visits		*	*									
2. Add standard operating procedures for chemotherapy side effects assessment		*	*									
3. Set the fields of the information retrieval system and make a reminder list		*	*									
4. Planning on-the-job education		*	*									
5. Establish a regular monitoring and checking mechanism		*	*									
<b>(II) \ execution period</b>												
1. Project publicity and timely clarification of issues							*	*				
2. Organize on-the-job education							*	*				
3. Execute according to the standard operating procedure for evaluating the side effects of chemotherapy							*	*				
4. The ad hoc team assists in regularly sending reminder lists				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
5. Regularly monitor and check the implementation status and include it in the unit quality control indicators				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
6. Negotiate with the information room to add reminder reports in the system				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>(III) \ evaluation period</b>												
1. Effectiveness evaluation												*
2. Results analysis and review for improvement												*

## CONCLUSIONS

The project can indeed improve the implementation rate of chemotherapy side effect assessment by oncology case managers. The integration of information systems and the establishment of a standard operating procedure can improve the implementation rate of side effect assessment and enhance the quality of clinical care, so it is recommended that the improvement plan can be continued, promoted, and effectively applied to clinical practice.

