

## Nursing Viewpoint: Toxicity Assessment In Patients Receiving Chemotherapy

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At Hacettepe University Oncology Hospital, chemotherapy treatments are carried out in daily treatment units except in patients who receive high dose or long-term infusion chemotherapy as in-patients. Patients who receive chemotherapy at the hospital and are then discharged usually experience chemotherapy toxicity at their homes.

Initial dose toxicity assessment is performed by the evaluation of the present state, while continuing courses are evaluated by assessing the patient's issues with the previous dose of chemotherapy. Evaluation is done according to our "Toxicity Evaluation Form" updated in 2014 and adapted from the "Common Terminology Criteria for Adverse Events (CTCAE) version 4.0".

With this form we evaluate symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, bone marrow suppression (anemia, leukopenia, thrombocytopenia), hair loss, mucositis, skin problems, sleep withdrawal, neurological problems, pain, eye problems, malaise, fatigue, sexual problems, weight loss, psychiatric problems which are common issues in patients who receive chemotherapy. This evaluation can

lead to dose modifications which in turn may assist in the early diagnosis, control and prevention of possible toxicities.

We, as oncology nurses, are responsible for primarily notifying the patient's physician about any toxicity we may find, and implementing any medical treatment to prevent or eliminate said toxicity. Also, we should plan courses to educate patients in non-pharmacological methods that may assist in reducing or eliminating these symptoms. Although we educate patients about general chemotherapy and symptom management at the time of diagnosis; we have observed that continued education about symptoms that the patient has experienced increases their participation in the process, thus improving compliance.

In conclusion, toxicity evaluation is accepted as a step in determining chemotherapy induced symptoms. Effective education of the patient and the implementation of nursing practices in the control of symptoms positively effects treatment success and also increases the quality of life of patients

