

# Holistic Cancer Care from Diagnosis to Recovery

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The nursing process aims to help nurses focus on the role of nursing in healthcare and its applications to provide patients with systematic, controlled, purposeful, and effective care. The major aim of the nursing process in its practice is to enhance life expectancy and compliance. By this means, nurses are facilitated through the nursing process to focus on the holistic care of the cancer patients they are taking care of to improve the quality of new life patients adopt after receiving adequate care. (Butler and Thayer, 2020) This benchmark assessment describes the nursing process as an effective approach to holistic care for the diagnosis, treatment, dealing with complications, and post-treatment side effects for cancer patients across the lifespan.

## Diagnosis and Staging of Cancer

### Diagnosis

To begin with, abnormal cells in the body divide uncontrollably while stopping the normal control mechanism of the body, resulting in cancer. Old abnormal cells do not die. Rather, they go out of control, doubling the number of abnormal cells in the body while destroying healthy tissues in the body, which produces a mass of extra cells colloquially called a tumour in the arena of medical science. Clinical examination during the first stage of cancer development detects deformations in any region of the body that is different from other normal ones in the body tissues. Inspection during the clinical examination detects the form of tumour formations in preputial mucosa, pharyngeal, laryngeal, oral, and vaginal cavities; likewise, deep palpation in the examination process identifies the consistency of accessible abdominal organs such as liver, spleen, and stomach, small and large intestine, and kidney with distinctive complications induced by the cancer tumour (Emmerick, Singh, et al., 2021) Following are the common suspicions of tumours in the body that may lead to diagnosis state are weight loss, fever, fluids in the cavities, anorexia, behavioural disorders, urogenital disorders, hemorrhagic state, etc.

Based on these general symptoms, the cancer diagnosis process includes three major stages: location of the tumour, evaluation of tumour extension, and determination of the historical nature of the tumour. The location process requires clinical investigations where the shape of certain structures is observed through the processes of inspection and deep palpation. The evaluation process assists the practitioner in establishing the treatment and evaluating therapeutic results. Furthermore, a histological examination is conducted to determine the historical nature of the tumour, including its size and the infiltration of the adjacent tissues. (Emmerick, Singh, et al, 2021)

## Staging of Cancer

When a cancer tumour is diagnosed, doctors and healthcare providers conduct tests and examinations to determine the stage of cancer so that the best treatment can be provided to the affected person. Clinical testing helps determine whether the tumour has affected the nearby tissues of the body or not; this is called staging. While this process is being done, a medical provider must put his/her related information into practice that each type of cancer tumour by organ has its own complex staging mechanism. Following is the curated list of cancer stages:

- Stage 0

This stage is considered pre-cancer as abnormal cells do not deeply invade the nearby tissues. Rather, they are found in the first layer of body cells.

- Stage I

The abnormal cells detected in the previous stage are still in the place where they were found first, covering a small area. Therefore, it is considered a curable stage.

- Stage II

The cancer tumour may grow in size in the organ or tissues where it started.

- Stage III

Cancer may be a bit larger than it was in stage II, and it is possible that cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes, tissues, or organs.

- Stage IV

In stage IV, cancer spread is metastasized now and may spread to other organs of the body. (Emmerick, Singh, et al, 2021)

## Complications of Cancer, Side Effects of Treatment, and Methods to Lessen Physical and Psychological Effects

### Complications of Cancer

If a physician treats cancer tumours more aggressively, a patient may experience complications, including poisoning by hormones and systemic haematological agents, poisoning due to antiestrogen

and immunosuppressive drugs, and adverse effects of immunosuppressive drugs that may affect the neurological condition of the patient. Three of the complications of cancer a patient may witness are as follows:

- Anemia

Anaemia is caused due to antineoplastic chemotherapy and radiation during or after the cancer treatment. During cytotoxic chemotherapy as a cancer treatment, the bone marrow of the patient could be severely affected, which causes anaemia. (Kroschinsky, Bonin, and et al, 2017)

- Abnormal Reaction of the Patient due to Radiotherapy

The radiological procedure often results in abnormal behaviour of the patient, such as the radiation beam, when it enters or leaves the body, disturbing the neuron activity in the brain and spinal cord. A patient may fumble with bedclothes, constantly shake his/her legs, or crawl around the room with his/her eyes open (Kroschinsky, Bonin, et al., 2017).

- Oral Ulcerative

Due to aggressive malignant treatment, a patient may suffer from oral ulceration because the mucosal lining of the oral mucosa and gastrointestinal tract is highly susceptible to toxicity during the treatment. In such a state, oral mucosa develops ulcers and directly or indirectly affects the soft tissue structures of the gastrointestinal tract, leading to oral complications (Kroschinsky, Bonin, et al., 2017).

## Side Effects of Treatment

Side effects of the cancer treatment may include difficulty in breathing, fatigue, weight loss, constipation or diarrhoea, hair loss, and an unusual immune system attacking healthy cells of the body. Other potential side effects may include pain, short-term memory loss, swelling, nervous system problems, chemical imbalances such as confusion, excessive thirst, frequent urination, etc (Kroschinsky, Bonin, et al., 2017).

## Methods to Lessen Physical and Psychological Effects

Once a person is diagnosed with cancer, he/she is most likely the victim of adverse physical as well as psychological effects such as distress, as everybody is afraid to hear the negative perspectives cancer brings with itself. However, these adverse effects can be lessened by adopting certain approaches to life, such as reinforcing the emotional relationship bond with friends, family, or close ones and delving into healthy activities with whom they feel contented so that they can psychologically feel better (Kroschinsky, Bonin, and et al., 2017). This strategy to look into life with a new perspective would also affect cancer patients from the positive side, as remaining active through healthy activities in daily

life is the best alternative to cope with physical problems.

## Factors Contributing to Incident and Mortality Rates of Various Cancers in Americans

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the incidence and mortality rate of various types of cancers in Americans is so high because of the exposure to the environmental toxins that cause cancer. The factors include consumption of alcohol and tobacco products, lack of physical activity, genetics, and radiation. American Cancer Society 2017 also stated one of the major factors why mortality rates of cancer are so high in the United States is the obesity epidemic caused by a sedentary lifestyle and inactivity that increases the risk of mortality rates and cancer incidents. (American Cancer Society, 2021)

## American Cancer Society (ACS)

American Cancer Society provides support and education through life-saving research based on the nursing process by linking cancer patients with a bunch of services to help them better understand diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and find the best possible cure for cancer treatment. The Society provides detailed education on tumour treatments, information regarding where to access healthcare, and briefs about side effects and complications of the therapy. ACS also offers services to family members, friends, and caregivers about how to help cope with a patient with a cancer diagnosis. (American Cancer Society, 2021)

## Recommendation

I recommend ACS TLC service, which is a Mastectomy and hair loss service, especially for women who have suffered appearance-related issues and hair loss due to chemotherapy, which can make a cancer survivor reclusive. To overcome such adverse effects, the TLC service offered by the ACS also makes it possible for cancer survivors to boost their self-confidence by purchasing mastectomy bras, wigs, turbans, etc., at an affordable cost to tackle their appearance-related side effects.

## Utilization of Nursing Process across the Life Span

The utilization of the nursing process in the field of healthcare to detect a cancer tumour includes assessment of the disease, diagnosis of the tumour, planning of the treatment, implementation of the treatment procedures, and evaluation of the outcomes after the treatment. There is not a single dime of doubt that the nursing process in cancer diagnosis and treatment is the complex world of a cancer patient's holistic care. Utilizing the nursing process across the life span, assessment involving critical

thinking skills of the healthcare providers is the foremost step for the early detection of cancer tumours. Assessment of the disease not only increases the possibility of successful treatment procedures but also aids healthcare professionals in making prompt decisions about the treatment. It is vital for the nurses during the assessment of the cancerous cells in a patient that they have assessed the patient's psychological impacts prior to cancer diagnosis. After the assessment, the diagnosis process comes into play, which involves clinical judgments to implement the patient's care plan. It includes a physical exam, imaging tests, laboratory testing, and the last biopsy if a physician has suspicions about a person being diagnosed with cancer. Planning is the third step of the nursing process, where outcomes of the cancer treatment are formulated, and a physician then goes with other options such as surgery, chemotherapy, or radiotherapist procedures. The fourth step is the implementation of the treatment procedures, which are carried out through the interventions. Last but not least, a patient should be psychologically prepared for the side effects and complications cancer treatment poses and should be counselled before treatment about what methods and activities he/she can adopt to manage post-cancer problems. (Butler and Thayer, 2020)

## Contribution of Liberal Arts and Science Studies to Nursing Knowledge

Undergraduate studies in Science Studies and Liberal Arts prepare nurses for how being educated can help them contribute to the arena of healthcare by building and developing the foundation of nursing knowledge. Such education provides evidence-based practices in the nursing process, such as techniques and skills to research nursing data and the implementation of the treatment procedures that should be put into medical practice. Nurses can continue receiving quality education regarding healthcare and can get training to acquire quality care strategies for patients with adequate standards of medical practice. (Raso, Garrino, and et al) Nurses, after completing their undergraduate education in Liberal Arts and Science Studies, can assist healthcare professionals as a prospective team to create innovations in healthcare. In my opinion, working in teams with accredited professionals will help nurses develop self-confidence that will improve their safety while minimizing the risk of errors while doing surgeries and therapies. Nurses who get training with professionals and higher field education can also become qualified educators and better researchers to spread knowledge about the nursing process. (Raso, Garrino, and et al)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the nursing process in terms of holistic care of patients being diagnosed with any type of cancer is expected to yield positive outcomes in the adaptation of quality healthcare for cancer patients who are trying to cope with the complications and cancer itself. For that reason, nurses develop a biopsychosocial approach to tend to cancer patients with holistic care. Therefore, it is essential that the nursing process and its implementation into the medical practice in healthcare

should be encouraged and enhanced.

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