Lymphoma: The Role of Nurses in the Treatment Process

Sarah Liptrott
MSc, BN (Hons), RN
Istituto Europeo di Oncologia, Milan (IT)

EBMT Swiss Study Day 2014, Zurich, Switzerland
Lymphoma Management

* **Watch & Wait**

* **Chemotherapy**
  * Single agent
    * Alkylating agents (cyclophosphamide, chlorambucil)
    * Purine nucleoside analogues (fludarabine, 2-CdA)
  * Combination chemotherapy
    * CHOP (cyclophosphamide + doxorubicin + vincristine + prednisone)
    * CHOEP or EPOCH (CHOP + etoposide)
    * CVP (cyclophosphamide + vincristine + prednisone)
    * FC (fludarabine+cyclophosphamide)

* **Immunotherapy**
  * Monoclonal antibodies
  * Targeted therapy

* **Radiotherapy**

* **Radioimmunotherapy**

* **Stem cell transplantation**

Source: Lymphoma Learning Programme for Nurses and Allied Healthcare Professionals (EBMT SNWG 2014)
The choice of treatment mainly depends on the:

- Type of lymphoma
  - Hodgkin Lymphoma, NHL subtype
- Disease stage (Ann Arbor classification) and location
- How quickly the cancer is growing
  - Indolent or aggressive lymphoma
- Patient age
- Age-adjusted International Prognostic Index (aaIPI) risk level
- Feasibility of dose-intensified approaches
- Eligibility for stem cell transplant (SCT)
- Presence of other health problems
- Clinical trial eligibility

Source: Lymphoma Learning Programme for Nurses and Allied Healthcare Professionals (EBMT SNWG 2014)
Nursing Care

Assessments and follow-up

Treatment administration and management of side effects

Providing information, advice and emotional support

Source: Liptrott S. IEO 2009; www.mskcc.org
Patient Support During “Watch-and-wait”

- Providing:
  - Information and advice
  - Expectations, follow-up
  - Emotional support and reassurance
  - Instructions for personal care
  - Managing uncertainty

- Adopting a healthy lifestyle may help:
  - Eating a healthy diet
  - Maintaining a healthy weight
  - Alcohol in moderation
  - Stopping smoking
  - Regular exercise
  - Avoid stress

**Patient Support During Chemotherapy**

- Provide information about the treatment plan
  - Treatment schedule and duration
  - Venous access device (if applicable)
  - Anticipated side effects
    - e.g. infections, explaining the symptoms and how to avoid them, particularly if blood cell counts are low
    - Contacting the medical team if necessary

- Address fertility issues and provide support

- Management of side-effects → neutropenia/mucositis/n&v...

Patient Support During Immunotherapy

- Counselling patients on treatment administrations and anticipated outcomes and side-effects
- Dosing schedule
- Important safety information (hep B reactivation, Progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML), infusion related reactions)
- Important administration precautions

- Premedication (prophylactic antipyretic and antihistamine)

Patient Support During Immunotherapy

- Monitoring of vital signs (heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate) during and after the first infusion
- Providing supportive care, as required
  - e.g. reassuring the patient about chills and shaking, until symptoms resolve
- Severe reactions typically occur with 1st infusion, onset 30 - 120 mins
- Close monitoring patients:
  - Pre-existing cardiac or pulmonary conditions,
  - Experienced prior cardiopulmonary adverse reactions,
  - High numbers of circulating malignant cells (≥25,000/mm³)

* We need to know our patients!

Patient Support During Radiotherapy

* Provide information about the treatment and its side-effects
* Support and care before treatment:
  * address patient concerns
  * give instructions on skin care to minimise complications and discomfort
  * address fertility issues
  * assess for infection, skin integrity, dehydration, and sufficient haemoglobin level
  * Premedication

* Management of side effects

Patient Support
Pre- and Post-transplant

- Counselling patients on the procedure and anticipated outcomes and complications
- Premedication before SCT, to reduce unwarranted symptoms
- Ensuring the patient is hydrated before, during and after stem cell infusion
- Providing follow-up care to help prevent and treat complications

Patient Support
Pre- and Post-transplant

- Discharge plan and home care taking into consideration the type of transplant and the risk of complications
- Ensuring consistent communication between outpatient and home caregivers
- Note: Unit-specific recommendations should be followed.

Patient Support
Emerging Therapies

Emerging therapies for relapsed/refractory NHL


We need to be up-to-date!
Supportive and Palliative Care

Supportive Care

* Aims to alleviate the symptoms and complications of cancer, and to reduce or prevent the toxicities of cancer treatment

* Includes:
  * Providing advice and information regarding care options, practical, and social needs
  * Providing help with emotional and physical needs
  * Assisting in symptom relief
  * Providing contacts for care and support
    * Support groups

Source: www.who.int/cancer/palliative
Supportive and Palliative Care

Palliative Care

- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- Enhances quality of life
- May also positively influence the course of illness
- Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care
- Offers a support system to:
  - Help patients live as actively as possible until death and
  - Help the family cope during the patients illness

Source: www.who.int/cancer/palliative
Special Patient Groups

- **Paediatric patients**
  - Supporting parents and family
  - Dealing with uncertainty

- **Elderly patients**
  - Susceptibility & unpredictable toxicity
  - Co-morbidity and drug interactions

- **Adolescents and young adults**
  - Unique psychosocial challenges

- **Pregnant patients**
  - Treatment during pregnancy?
  - MDT approach

Source: Lymphoma Learning Programme for Nurses and Allied Healthcare Professionals (EBMT SNWG 2014)
Summary

- Nurses have a key role in the treatment process
- Education and support are the cornerstone of nursing care
- BUT.... we need to keep up to date and respond to our patients needs....

www.ebmt-swiss-ng.org