Chemotherapy Education for Patients With Cancer: A Literature Review

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A literature review was conducted to determine the best way to provide chemotherapy education to patients. Sixteen articles that employed various teaching methods (e.g., video recordings, in-person class) were identified. Some educational methods have been proven to decrease anxiety, which allows patients to retain more information. Many ways can be used to provide chemotherapy education, and no method has been proven to be significantly more effective than another. Maximum retention is largely based on patient preference.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to determine the best way to provide information to patients about chemotherapy using CINAHL® and MEDLINE®. Initially, attempts were made to use articles published only within the past five years, but because of the major focus on chemotherapy education, the date range was changed to include articles from 1999–2013. Key terms included chemotherapy, anticancer drugs, antineoplastic agents, patient education, teaching materials, and video education. Only quantitative research was included. The author identified 16 articles to be used in the literature review (see Table 1).

When conducting the search, the author wanted to use only research that focused on oncology and chemotherapy education. Chemotherapy education and education on cancer itself are different because of the wide range of side effects that require appropriate management in addition to challenges of the diagnosis (Kinnane & Thompson, 2008). The author also had an interest in informed consent for chemotherapy, so only articles that discussed informed consent were included.

Findings

Different forms of patient education (e.g., audio recording, video recording, in-person class, one-on-one discussion, telephone calls) were included in the literature review to determine the best method of providing education to patients about chemotherapy. Some of these approaches allow patients to learn on their own time (Thomas et al., 2000). Chemotherapy education through the use of audio- or video-recording methods...