Maculopapular Skin Rashes Associated With High-Dose Chemotherapy: Prevalence and Risk Factors

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Key Points...

➤ A substantial number of patients developed maculopapular skin rashes after receiving high-dose chemotherapy for a range of hematologic diseases.

➤ When skin rashes occur, they have a severe effect on patients’ physical and emotional well-being at a time when they are coping with a life-threatening disease and other debilitating side effects of treatment.

➤ Patients who are newly diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia and are treated with cytarabine-containing protocols are at greater risk for developing rashes.

➤ More research needs to be done to determine possible prophylaxis and to increase knowledge in this specialty area to enable nurse and patient education to decrease patient distress and length-of-stay issues.

Literature Review

A review of the current literature revealed a scarcity of research detailing the prevalence and causes of dermatologic problems. Much of the literature consisted of reviews rehashing current views on the management of toxicities (Armstrong, Rust, & Kohtz, 1997; Gallagher, 1995; McCarthy, 2002) or case studies focusing on rare skin reactions or chemotherapy not used in the current study (Gallagher, 2001; Haisfield-Wolfe & Rund, 2002; Hockett, 2004; Keung, Knovich, Powell, & Pettenati, 2004; Schaich, Schakel, Illmer, Ehninger, & Bornhauser, 2003; Tse, Lie, Ng, & Kwong, 2003). Pichler (2003) researched the pathophysiology of delayed drug hypersensitivity reactions in detail, but more research is needed in the context of high-dose chemotherapy. Only Pearson, Sirohi, Powles, Treleaven, and Mortimer (2004) reported data on...