Clinical Characteristics of Children and Adolescents Undergoing Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation Who Develop Oral Mucositis

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OBJECTIVES: To describe the clinical characteristics of children and adolescents undergoing hematopoietic cell transplantation (HCT) who develop oral mucositis.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 45 patients who underwent HCT from July 2015 to May 2016 at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

METHODS & VARIABLES: Clinical factors were described as transplantation type, mucositis severity or grade, mucositis duration, days to engraftment, total parenteral nutrition (TPN) support, IV opioid pain management use during mucositis, positive blood or oral cultures, and length of hospitalization, then compared across mucositis grade.

RESULTS: 24 patients had grade 3 or greater mucositis onset from day -3 to day 9 of transplantation; of these, 23 required IV opioid medication to treat mucosal pain. Patients with mucositis grade 3 or greater were more likely to have undergone an allogeneic transplantation, receive TPN, have documented positive blood or oral cultures, and have longer hospitalizations than those with low-grade mucositis.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: Nurses are in a unique position to propose and administer interventions to prevent and alleviate symptoms of mucositis.

KEYWORDS children and adolescents; hematopoietic cell transplantation; oral mucositis

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