



PERFORMANCE OF THE NURSE IN RADIOTHERAPY

¹Jean Nelson Ferst, ^{*2,3}Gerli Elenise Gehrke Herr, ^{2,3}Vanessa Adelina Bandeira, ³Sandra da Silva Kinalski, ³Joseila Sonogo Gomes, ^{2,3}Christiane de Fátima Colet and ²Cátia Matte Dezordi^b

¹Hospital of Charity of Ijuí, Ijuí (RS), Brazil, ZIP CODE: 98700-000

²Department of Life Science, Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Ijuí (RS), Brazil, ZIP CODE: 98700-000

³Program of Masters Degree in Health Integral Attention, Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Ijuí (RS), Brazil, ZIP CODE: 98700-000

⁴Federal University of Santa Maria-UFSM, Santa Maria (RS) Brazil

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 15th June, 2018
Received in revised form
22nd July, 2018
Accepted 27th August, 2018
Published online 29th September, 2018

Key Words:

Ambulatory Care.
Nursing care.
Radiotherapy.
Oncology.

ABSTRACT

Cancer is a public health problem with a high incidence and mortality rate. The study aims to analyze and discuss about the nurse's role in a radiotherapy unit. This is an experience report performed in a radiotherapy unit of a High Complexity Unit in an Oncology Center of a general hospital in the Northwest region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The insertion in the unit occurred through the Postgraduate Curricular Internship Lato Sensu in Oncology. It was identified that the nurses' performance is focused on the nursing consultation, at which time the care plan inherent to the treatment of the patient and his / her family is established. In addition, the managerial and leadership activities in front of the team were evidenced. The nurses' performance as supervisor, manager, coordinator, nursing team leader and active participant of the interdisciplinary team at this location was verified. In addition, the nursing consultation constitutes a fundamental intervention strategy, with a view to reducing adverse reactions, resulting from oncological treatment and enabling the creation of a link among the nurse, patient and family. The opportunity to make reflections and discussions about the nurse's role in radiotherapy aims to qualify the care to the individual with cancer, extended to the family.

Copyright © 2018, Jean Nelson Ferst et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Jean Nelson Ferst, Gerli Elenise Gehrke Herr, Vanessa Adelina Bandeira, et al. 2018. "Performance of the nurse in radiotherapy", *International Journal of Development Research*, 8, (09), 22605-22607.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer is a public health problem evidenced by the high incidence, mortality, hospital costs and consequences for patients, family members, health services and care demands. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that cancer was responsible for 8.2 million deaths in 2012, accounting for 21.7% of deaths from chronic diseases (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2014).

***Corresponding author:** ^{2,3}Gerli Elenise Gehrke Herr

²Department of Life Science, Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Ijuí (RS), Brazil, ZIP CODE: 98700-000

³Program of Masters Degree in Health Integral Attention, Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Ijuí (RS), Brazil, ZIP CODE: 98700-000

In Brazil, the National Cancer Institute (INCA) estimates the occurrence of approximately 600,000 new cases for the years 2018 and 2019 (MINISTRY OF HEALTH, 2017). For the treatment of cancer patients, different therapeutic modalities are used, which include surgical techniques, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy or the combination of two or more. The WHO, in this context, shows that two-thirds of people with cancer will use radiotherapy at some stage of treatment, either in isolation or associated with other therapeutic forms (MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE, 2014). During the radiotherapy treatment, the oncological patient is attended by a multiprofessional team, of which the nurse is part. The duties of the nurse in the radiotherapy unit are established in the Resolution of the Federal Nursing Council, n° 211, of July 1, 1998, which establishes among its functions to plan, organize, supervise, perform and evaluate all nursing activities based in an assistance methodology (FEDERAL COUNCIL

OF NURSING, 1998). So, it is emphasized the nursing consultation, a private activity of the nurse, regulated by Law No. 7,498, dated June 25, 1986 (FEDERAL COUNCIL OF NURSING, 1986) and defined as a tool that uses components of the scientific method to identify health / disease, prescribe and implement Nursing measures that contribute to the prevention of diseases and diseases, in the promotion and protection of health, recovery and rehabilitation of the individual, family and community (FEDERAL COUNCIL OF NURSING, 1993). Research carried out in a University Center for Cancer Control in Rio de Janeiro showed that the nursing consultation promoted a high degree of adherence to preventive measures, since it provided a favorable measure to guide prevention actions and solve pertinent doubts (ANDRADE *et al.*, 2014). In addition, the authors pointed out that nursing professionals need to consider the patient in his/her entirety by addressing aspects related to the treatment, as well as the patient's involvement in the real need to perform self-care practices in order to reduce the damage inherent to radiotherapy. The daily routine of nursing in oncology is full of contradictory feelings, both on the part of the patients, as well as the relatives and professionals. In this sense, it is important that nurses exercise their leadership and consider these aspects with a view to integral care (REZENDE and FERREIRA NETO, 2013).

The oncology nurse needs technical-scientific improvement and specific skills regarding the different modalities of cancer treatment, physiological and emotional changes and side effects of the treatment to guide and improve the quality of life of the patient and family (ZAWATSKI, 2014). Based on these considerations, the present study aims to analyze and discuss about the nurse's role in a radiotherapy unit.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an experience report about the performance of the Nurse in a unit of radiotherapy of a Center of High Complexity in Oncology (CACON). The report is a descriptive research tool that weaves reflections about an action or a set of actions regarding a situation experienced in the professional scope, of interest of the scientific community (CAVALCANTE and LIMA, 2012). The stage was held at CACON of a general hospital, of size IV that serves a population of 1.5 million inhabitants that covers 120 cities in the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. The radiotherapy service was implanted in 2002 and its team is composed of two radiotherapist physicians, one physicist-physician, one nurse specialist oncology, two nursing technicians, one nursing assistant, eight radiotherapy technicians, two receptionists and one hygienist. The insertion in the radiotherapy unit occurred through the Lato Sensu Postgraduate Course in Oncology Course of the Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, with a 90-hour workload, supervised by a nurse specialist in oncology. The actions developed during the internship period were part of the daily life of the unit, such as nursing consultation, management and administration of the nursing service, audit and participation of the actions together with the team.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the internship, it was identified that the nurse is the care manager and needs to act autonomously and qualified for decision making. The radiotherapy sector, due to its

specificity, requires the technical, scientific and administrative nurse knowledge. In it, nurses are focused on the nursing consultation, a moment of direct interaction with patients and their families, with a view to orienting them regarding the uncertainties related to the treatment and its consequences, to resolve doubts, to transmit information and guidelines for self-care.

The nursing consultation is a responsibility of the nurse (FEDERAL COUNCIL OF NURSING, 1986), at which time the health conditions are identified and the nursing diagnoses are listed. The nurse prescribes health promotion actions with a view to recovering the health of the individual (MEDINA *et al.*, 2008). It should be emphasized that nursing actions must aim holistic care of the individual, inserted in a social context, permeated by feelings, extended to the family (DUARTE and NORO, 2013). In addition, for the nurse, patient care is not restricted to performing technical tasks, it includes knowing how to listen, speaking and perceiving that the dialogue qualifies care (SALIMENA *et al.*, 2013). In this context, the nursing consultation is a moment of interaction between patient, family and nurse, which aims to establish a relationship of trust and co-responsibility.

At the first consultation, the patient and his / her companion are advised regarding the objectives of the therapy, care of the irradiated skin, according to its severity, it may be necessary to suspend the treatment until the tissue reconstruction. In subsequent consultations verbal complaints are systematically recorded in the medical record so that preventive actions can be taken during treatment to reduce local toxicity. From that moment, new guidelines and conducts are carried out to promote effective care and comfort. In addition, the nurse seeks comprehensive care that does not prioritize only physical aspects, procedures, technologies and medications adopted in the treatment, but also the psychosocial and human aspects of care (SOARES and ALBUQUERQUE, 2014). In this study, the use of radiotherapy in the treatment of patients with hepatic insufficiency was considered to be an important factor in the treatment of patients with hepatic impairment (Silva *et al.*, 2004).

During the accomplishment of the experiences in radiotherapy, it was also observed managerial activities of the Nurse, such as control of stock of materials and medicines, participation of the nursing audit, monitoring of the medical equipment, preparation of scales, organization of the unit, participation of the actions together with the team, assigning activities to the technicians, as well as supervising their actions. In this context, the importance of nursing professional leadership to guarantee the quality of the care provided is highlighted (SILVA *et al.*, 2016). Nurses working in oncological units of a Hospital Escola de Pelotas-RS report that leadership is an essential skill for nurses working in oncology, for facilitating the management of care, nursing staff and service (SILVA *et al.*, 2016). The authors emphasize that the nurse as leader directs the paths to be traveled by the team, since it knows how to conduct in an equal way for all members and that seeks the care of the patient. The importance of the nurse's role in the management of the service, and especially in front of the nursing team, that is, in addition to its performance in the needs of the patients and their families, is important to be attentive to the work process of their team. It is considered important that the nurse knows the fragilities of his / her sector in order to identify solutions, to appropriate information that

will subsidize the decisions and follow-up of the actions implemented for pertinent adjustments, changes and adaptations (MARQUIS and HUSTON, 2015). It is evident in the unit studied that the nurse encourages his team and values it, since teamwork is the key element in the dynamics and organization of the unit, for the establishment of an organizational policy that supports interdisciplinarity and completeness (SILVA, MOREIRA and LEITE, 2014).

Faced with the required skills of nurses in this work environment, the need for professional and specialized experience to perform in oncology stands out. However, the review by Santos et al. (2013) shows that the preparation for oncology work is limited in the undergraduate program, which gives nurses difficulties in providing specific care in this sector. In addition, the authors highlight the need for technical-scientific update through specializations, refresher courses and participation of events as tools for the qualification of the care provided in oncology. Scientific knowledge is important for the advancement of the nursing profession. In radiotherapy, nurses need permanent updating for qualified and humanized care, aware of the potential complications arising from cancer and the different treatment modalities that can be used, given that the specificities demanded by this place are not experienced in the daily routine of the process professional training at the undergraduate level. The opportunity to perform specialization in radiotherapy and to know the dynamics of this place of action of the nurse contributed to acquire and expand knowledge regarding the nurse's performance as supervisor, manager, coordinator, leader of the nursing team and active participant of the interdisciplinary team of this place.

It is worth noting the expressive participation of the nurse in the care of patients in radiotherapy, which demands skills, knowledge and skills that go beyond their area of professional training. In this context, the nursing consultation constitutes a fundamental intervention strategy, with a view to reducing adverse reactions, resulting from the oncological treatment and enabling the creation of a link between the nurse, patient and family. With regard to the working environment of a radiotherapy unit, it is complex, in which the nurse often faces difficulties related to the management and the very care that the patient requires and that often goes beyond his theoretical-practice. In this interim, the importance of the curricula of nursing undergraduate courses includes disciplines that instigate students to seek improvement and deepening. The relevance of this work is centered on the opportunity to perform reflections and discussions of nurses who work and who intend to work in radiotherapy, as well as, teachers and managers of health care institutions, with a view to qualifying assistance to the individual with cancer, in treatment extended to the family.

REFERENCES

- Andrade, K., S., Francz, A. C., Grellmann, M. S., Belchior, P. C., Oliveira, J.A., and Wassita, D. N. 2014. Nursing consultation: evaluation of adherence to self care of patients submitted to radiotherapy. *Rev. Enferm. UERJ*. 22 (5), pp. 622-628.
- Cavalcante, B. L. L., and Lima, U. T. S. 2012. Report of experience of a nursing student in a specialized office in wound treatment. *Journal of Nursing and Health*. 1 (2), pp. 94-103.
- Duarte, M. L., and Noro, A. 2013. Humanization of care in the radiology sector: difficulties and suggestions of nursing professionals. *Cogitare Enferm*. 18 (3), pp. 532-538.
- Federal Nursing Council 1986. Law n. 7,498, dated June 25, 1986. It provides for the regulation of the exercise of Nursing and provides other measures. DOU, 26.06.86. Rio de Janeiro: COFEN.
- Federal Nursing Council 1993. Resolution n. 159, dated April 19, 1993. Provides for the Nursing consultation. Rio de Janeiro: COFEN.
- Federal Nursing Council 1998. Resolution n. 211, dated July 1, 1998. It deals with the performance of nursing professionals working with ionizing radiation. Rio de Janeiro: COFEN.
- Marquis, B. L., and Huston, C. J. 2015. Administration and leadership in nursing: theory and practice. Ed. 8, Porto Alegre, Artmed.
- Medina, A., Leal, A. F., Zavaglia, G. O., Muniz, R. M., Guimarães, S. R. and Faes, A. D. R. (2008) Nursing consultation as a strategy for cancer patient care in radiotherapy. Available online: <http://periodicos.uem.br/ojs/index.php/CiencCuidSaude/article/view/6727/pdf>.
- Ministry of Health. National Cancer Institute José Alencar Gomes da Silva (INCA) 2017. Estimate 2018: Incidence of Cancer in Brazil. Available online: <http://www.inca.gov.br/estimativa/2018/>
- Ministry of Health. National Cancer Institute José Alencar Gomes da Silva (INCA) 2014. Estimate 2014: Incidence of Cancer in Brazil. Available online: <http://www.inca.gov.br/estimativa/2014/>
- Primo, C. C., Cesar, F. D., Lima, E. F., Leite, F. M. C., and Caniçali, R. A. 2016. Nursing care for patients with head and neck cancer submitted to radiotherapy. *Rev. Pesqui. Cuid. Fundam. (Online)*. 8 (1), pp. 3820-3831.
- Rezende, M.C., and Ferreira Neto, J.L. 2013. Subjective processes in the experience of a nursing team in oncology. Available online: <http://www.gpec.ucdb.br/pssa/index.php/pssa/article/view/215/296>.
- Salimena, A. O., Teixeira, S. R., Amorim, T. V., Paiva, A. C. P. and C. Melo, M. C. S. C. 2013. The experience of nurses in cancer patient care. *Cogitare Enferm*. 18 (1), pp. 142-147.
- Santos, F. C., Brito, B. C., Santos, V. L., and Camelo, S. H. 2013. Leadership practices adopted by nurses of oncological hospital units: an integrative review. *Rev. Gestão & Saúde*. 4 (3), pp. 1157-1176.
- Silva, C. N., Amestoy, S. C., Arriera, I. C. O., Muniz, R. M., and Bão, A. C. P. 2016. Exercise of leadership of the nurse in oncological units. *Rev. Baiana Enferm*. 30 (2), pp. 1-10.
- Silva, M. M., Moreira, M. C., and Leite, J.L. 2014. Evidence of integral care in the nursing team practice in oncologic palliative care. *Rev. Eletr. Enf*. 16 (4), pp. 795-803.
- Soares, S. G., S. and Albuquerque, J. O. L. 2014. Intervention of the nurse in the chemotherapeutic treatment of women with breast cancer. *Health Magazine in Focus*. 1 (1), pp. 29-45.
- World Health Organization 2014. Global Status Report on Noncommunicable Diseases 2014. Switzerland; pp 1-282.
- Zawatski, R. L. 2014. Management in a chemotherapy unit: a case study in Unimed / RS hospital institutions. Conclusion of the Lato Sensu Postgraduate Course in Strategic Management in a Health Cooperative. Regional University of the Northwest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Ijuí (RS) Brazil.