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Health literacy needs of patients with lymphoma undergoing chemotherapy- importance of nursing and pharmacist intervention

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Introduction

Introduction Over the past decade, there are an increasing number of patients diagnosed with haematological malignancies. Non- Hodgkin lymphoma is ranked the tenth most common cancer in Hong Kong in which chemotherapy is the mainstay treatment for lymphoma. Health literacy providing to lymphoma patients undergoing chemotherapy is becoming more important as non-adherence to supportive medications and insufficient education on self-management of side effects can lead to hospital admissions and life threatening complications. However, health literacy needs of lymphoma patients are scarcely being investigated in Hong Kong.

Objectives

To identify the education needs of lymphoma patients undergoing chemotherapy, provided by specialty nurse and clinical pharmacist.

Methodology

To adopt a cross-sectional survey design. Patients with lymphoma undergoing chemotherapy were recruited in lymphoma out-patient clinic. Survey was completed by the selected patients using a non-validated instrument containing 15 education needs on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the least important and 5 being the most important).

Result

A total of 51 patients (28 male and 23 female) completed the survey between the periods of October to November 2015. All patients returned the survey within the stated period. The response rate was 100%. The most important health literacy needs from specialty nurse are the knowledge about their disease and treatment plan (68.6%), blood test and investigations (64.7%) and disease monitoring (54.9%). In terms of health literacy needs from clinical pharmacist, the most ranked needs are

explanation on supportive medications (62.7%), knowledge on chemotherapy, side effects and their management (60.8%), review and discussing medication issues (58.8%), explanation on chemotherapy schedule (54.9%) and chemotherapy regimen (54.9%). The result showed that most of the patients wanted to know more about their disease, treatment, side-effects and their management. Specialist nurse and clinical pharmacist play an important role to improve patients' health literacy in order to optimise the treatment outcome of patients with lymphoma.