

Review Article

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Nursing role and strategy in pain management in palliative care

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ABSTRACT

Palliative care plays a role in meeting the needs of individuals facing life limiting illnesses. One of the aspects of this specialized healthcare approach is effectively managing pain. Understanding types of pain from nociceptive to neuropathic is essential in navigating the nature of pain within a palliative care setting. Nursing strategies for pain management adopt an approach that addresses sources and aspects of pain. Alongside medication management, including opioids and complementary medications, non-pharmacological interventions such as therapy, massage and music therapy are utilized. Continuous monitoring, collaboration, patient education and addressing dimensions are crucial elements in nursing strategies. Nurses also serve as advocates, in navigating considerations related to pain management while ensuring autonomy and shared decision making. This exploration highlights the multifaceted contributions that nurses make in managing pain. It underscores the importance of research, education and fostering an organizational culture. Efforts, like these play a role in improving the efficiency of nursing practices in the changing field of palliative care. To sum up nursing shines as a guiding light, in providing evidence-based care greatly enhancing the quality of life for individuals confronting illnesses with limited time.

Keywords: Palliative care, Pain management, Nursing role, Multimodal approach, Holistic care

INTRODUCTION

Palliative care plays a role, in meeting the needs of individuals facing life limiting illnesses. One of the aspects of this specialized healthcare approach is effectively managing pain.¹ Nursing has a multifaceted role in pain management within care encompassing various dimensions that collectively contribute to improving patients quality of life. The evolving literature on this topic highlights the significance of nursing interventions, communication strategies, collaboration with healthcare

professionals, continuous education and addressing the aspects involved in navigating the challenging field of palliative pain management.^{2,3} Nurses have a responsibility in conducting assessments to understand and evaluate the pain experienced by patients receiving palliative care. They use validated tools like the brief pain inventory (BPI) and Edmonton symptom assessment system (ESAS) to gain insight into aspects of pain such as intensity, location and its broader impact on the patients psychological, social and spiritual well-being.^{4,5} This thorough assessment forms the basis for creating care plans that cater to each

individuals needs and formulating effective strategies for managing their pain. Communication emerges as a strategy, in nursing's role when it comes to pain management. It goes beyond assessing levels of pain; effective communication involves empathetic dialogues with patients. These conversations delve into how the patient experiences pain, their objectives and their preferences, for managing pain.^{6,7} This type of patient focused communication not only helps build a therapeutic connection but also guides the creation of customized treatment plans that adhere to the principles of shared decision making. This collaborative approach guarantees that patients actively participate in making decisions, about their pain management, fostering a sense of independence and control. Nursing interventions go beyond methods and embrace a holistic range of strategies. Non pharmaceutical interventions, such as relaxation techniques, therapeutic touch, music therapy and mindfulness are aspects of nursing practice in managing pain for patients in care.^{8,9} These interventions not only contribute to relieving pain. They also improve the overall well-being of patients. Recognizing the nature of pain, nurses utilize these approaches to address the emotional and psychological dimensions that often accompany physical pain. Alongside providing patient care, nurses in settings also act as advocates, ensuring that the patient's perspective is considered when planning and implementing pain management strategies.^{10,11} Advocacy involves navigating considerations that may arise when patients are hesitant to use medications due to concerns about side effects or addiction fears. Nurses equipped with knowledge and effective communication skills play a role in facilitating decision making and promoting a balanced approach between pain relief and potential risks. Continuous education emerges as an element, within the nursing role regarding pain management. Continuing education, for nurses is crucial to staying up to date with the evidence based practices in care. This includes learning about options, innovative interventions and updated pain assessment tools. By prioritizing development, nurses demonstrate their commitment to delivering exceptional care to patients who are facing complex pain situations. Collaboration across disciplines is a theme in the literature, highlighting how nursing practice is interconnected with other healthcare professionals in palliative care teams.¹² Effective communication and collaboration with doctors, pharmacists, physical therapists and other members of the healthcare team play a role in approaching pain management from a coordinated perspective. Including nursing perspectives in discussions ensures that care planning is comprehensive and centered around the patient. It's worth noting that the literature recognizes the ethical aspects that nurses face when managing pain in palliative care settings. Nurses often grapple with their responses when witnessing patient suffering and may experience moral distress when making difficult decisions about pain management. The literature emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture that addresses nurses' emotional well-being, helping them build resilience and coping mechanisms to navigate the complex emotional

landscape of palliative care. The evolving literature highlights how nursing plays a role within the world of palliative pain management. Nurses contribute in ways including conducting pain assessments, engaging in patient centered communication, advocating for patients' needs, providing education and collaborating with other healthcare professionals to create a compassionate tapestry of care. In striving to optimize pain management for individuals facing life-limiting illnesses, nursing serves as a guiding light by practicing based on evidence, within the realm of care. This study aims to review both the role and strategies employed by nurses in managing pain within care.

METHODS

In this review, which was completed on 21 November 2023, we critically analyze the current literature found in PubMed, CINAHL and PsycINFO databases. We carefully selected terms and keywords related to the subject matter, including "pain management," "care," "nursing role" and "patient comfort." Our focus was on research studies conducted with subjects. Published in English specifically from 2008 onwards. By following this approach, we aim to provide a synthesis of evidence that sheds light on the evolving strategies and roles of nurses in improving pain management within the context of palliative care.

DISCUSSION

Pain, within care, presents itself in ways encompassing physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects. Skilled nurses conduct assessments using validated tools to create care plans. The complexity of addressing pain in a setting becomes apparent when considering the types of pain such as nociceptive and neuropathic. Psychologically, patients face challenges like anxiety, depression and fear, requiring an approach to their care. It's important to recognize that emotional well-being extends beyond patients and affects caregivers well, highlighting the interconnected nature of care.^{13,14} Socially, pain can disrupt interactions, create financial burdens that nurses must address within the broader societal context. Nursing strategies for managing pain involve an approach that acknowledges its origins. This includes medication management with opioids and adjuvant medications, alongside pharmacological interventions. Continuous monitoring, collaboration, patient education and addressing aspects are all dynamic components of nursing strategies. Nurses play a role in advocating for considerations related to pain management.

Clinical manifestation

In the field of care which focuses on improving the quality of life for individuals facing illnesses, it is essential to have a deep understanding of how pain manifests in a clinical setting. Palliative care acknowledges that pain is multi-dimensional and requires a holistic approach from nursing professionals. In care, physical pain can vary in terms of

intensity, duration and where it is felt. Nociceptive pain, often associated with tissue damage like complications related to cancer can be experienced as throbbing or aching sensations.^{15,16} Neuropathic pain, caused by nerve injuries tends to feel sharp shooting or burning. Breakthrough pain refers to intense flare ups that occur alongside pain management and require immediate assessment and intervention. Psychologically pain in care is closely connected to anxiety and depression which adds complexity to the symptoms experienced by patients. Not do patients have to deal with sensations but they also face emotional distress including fear of uncontrolled pain, loss of independence and uncertainty, about the future¹⁷. Sleep disturbances further contribute to challenges leading to fatigue and reduced resilience. The continuous presence of pain can lead to challenges, like difficulty focusing and remembering things, which can have an impact on a patients psychological well-being.^{18,19} Emotionally individuals receiving care often go through emotions in response, to pain including frustration, helplessness and fear. The emotional impact of illness goes beyond the individual. Affects their relationships, with loved ones. Many patients often go through a period of grief and anticipatory mourning as they accept the changes their illness will bring to their lives. This emotional burden not affects the patients themselves. Also has an impact, on their family members and caregivers who witness their loved ones, in pain. In care it's essential to address these aspects because emotional well-being is closely connected to physical comfort. Pain also has an impact making it harder for patients to participate in interactions and activities that hold meaning for them. Patients may withdraw socially feel isolated and struggle with a sense of alienation while managing the challenges of pain. Additionally, there are burdens associated with the cost of medications and potential loss of income due to reduced work capacity, which further strain circumstances. Nurses have a role, in identifying and dealing with these impacts by collaborating with patients and their loved ones. This involves not managing the aspects of pain but also facilitating support groups connecting patients, with community resources and providing education on effective pain management strategies to navigate social challenges. The experience of pain in care is complex, involving psychological, emotional and social aspects. Recognizing and addressing these dimensions is crucial for nurses to provide patient-centered care. Nursing professionals play a role, in relieving pain and improving the quality of life for individuals in palliative care. They achieve this through assessment, communication and collaborative interventions. The field of healthcare is always changing, emphasizing the significance of research and education in order to gain an understanding and improve pain management within this domain.

Management

In the field of care which focuses on improving the quality of life for individuals facing life limiting illnesses nurses play a role, in managing pain. Pain management in care is

complex. Requires a personalized approach. In this review we delve into the aspects of pain management, in care with a specific focus on the nursing techniques employed to address the different facets of pain in this specialized environment. Effectively managing pain relies on conducting an assessment of patient's pain experiences. This assessment goes beyond considering factors, like the intensity, location and nature of the pain; it also takes into account the emotional elements that contribute to an individual's overall experience of pain.²⁰ Nursing professionals utilize tools for assessing pain and engage in empathetic communication to gain a detailed understanding of the patient's individual experience, with pain.²¹ After conducting an evaluation, nursing approaches, to managing pain often involve a combination of strategies. Since pain in care is rarely caused by a factor this approach combines different interventions to address its various causes. Medication management plays a role with painkillers tailored to the type of pain. Opioids like morphine and fentanyl are commonly used for moderate to pain with adjustment to balance effective relief and potential side effects. Additional pharmacological interventions, such as medications like anticonvulsants or antidepressants may be incorporated to manage nerve related pain or target aspects of the pain experience. Non medication strategies, including therapy, massage, relaxation techniques and music therapy are components of this comprehensive approach. These strategies not provide relief but also contribute to the overall well-being of the patient. Nursing responsibilities go beyond administering medication. Include monitoring and reassessment. Regular evaluations help gauge the effectiveness of pain management strategies. Allow nursing professionals to make adjustments based on the changing nature of pain in palliative care. This vigilant monitoring helps identify side effects or complications related to pain medications at a stage promoting proactive and responsive patient care.²² Effective communication and collaboration within teams are aspects of nursing strategies, in managing pain. Nurses collaborate with doctors, pharmacists, physical therapists and other healthcare professionals to ensure a well-integrated approach, to pain management. Regular team meetings play a role, in exchanging information and making adjustments to the care plan based on the changing needs of patients. This collaborative approach values the expertise of each team member resulting in a patient focused approach to pain management. Education is a strategy for nurses when it comes to managing pain in care. They not provide education to patients but also extend it to their families and caregivers. This education covers aspects such as understanding pain expectations related to pain management potential side effects of medications and the importance of following the treatment plan. By empowering patients and their support systems with knowledge they are encouraged to participate in managing pain and gain a sense of control during challenging circumstances. In care nurses also address the psychological dimensions of pain by providing emotional support, empathetic listening and validating patients

experiences. All essential elements of nursing care. Additionally, nurses help patients access counseling services or support groups as they recognize the impact that pain can have on health and emotional well-being. The integration of care principles emphasizes the need to address both emotional aspects of pain simultaneously. Nursing strategies, for pain management also extend into end of life care planning. Having sincere conversations regarding the progression of the illness potential fluctuations, in pain levels and the various choices, for managing pain in the stages of life are incredibly important. Advanced care planning enables patients to communicate their preferences, for pain management and ensures that interventions align with their values and goals. The integration of technology in pain management is an evolving aspect of the nursing role. Telehealth platforms facilitate monitoring enabling nurses to assess pain levels offer support and adjust pain management strategies as required.²³ This technological integration enhances accessibility to care and promotes interventions for patients who may have difficulties with physical mobility. The nursing role and approach to pain management in care involve a dynamic approach. From conducting assessments to implementing interventions nurses play a central role, in addressing the complex nature of pain experienced by individuals facing life limiting illnesses. Collaborative efforts, education and holistic care are emphasized to underscore the dedication of nursing professionals in optimizing the quality of life for palliative care patients while recognizing the challenges posed by pain within this specialized healthcare setting.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, nursing plays a role, in the well-being of patients when it comes to managing pain in palliative care. The conversation sheds light on the nature of pain and the diverse approaches used by nursing professionals. As the field continues to evolve it underscores the importance of research, education and a supportive organizational culture to optimize nursing effectiveness in care.

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