Discussion Board—Pain Management Case Study

NURS458—Standard Professional Nursing—Palliative Care

Purpose of Assignment

To allow the student to devise and evaluate a plan of care relating to end of life pain control. Students will use critical thinking and information from the course textbook and other professional literature sources to support this discussion.

Student Approach to Assignment

This discussion board assignment asked many questions about a patient dealing with pain, dying, and children. This assignment involved using critical thinking to decide what medications the patient will need, how to best assess the patient’s pain, and how to answer the patient’s questions involving hospice and what will happen to her children when she passes. I had to use my knowledge of pain medication and end of life care, such as advanced directives, medications, patient comfort, hospice, and palliative care in general.

Reason for Inclusion of this Assignment in the Portfolio

This assignment led me to explore different aspects of the end of life process. First, I had to learn about medications used for pain management. I learned about assessing pain and the many aspects of pain assessment, such as intensity, location, type, consistency, and type of pain. I learned about different myths and common fears of administering pain medications. I had to come up with what I felt was the best care to be implemented for excoriation. In the assignment the scenario changes and I had to adjust the pain medication regimen accordingly. I also had to explain what hospice was to the patient and why she needs a living will for her children to be taken care of after she dies.

Curricular Outcomes

- Critical Thinking

  - Uses decision-making skills in making clinical or professional judgments

    - Example: I had to use learned decision-making skills on the best way to fully assess a patient in pain. I had to think of all aspects associated with pain, such as barriers to pain assessment and how the pain is understood and perceived by the patient and the patient’s loved ones. I had to critically think of a new pain regimen when the patient’s health status changed and her original one was not working for her anymore. I had to come up with a plan for the patient’s excoriation. I also had to think of the best way to
present information to the patient about hospice and an advanced directive.

- **Engages in creative problem solving**
  
  o Example: When the patient’s pain regimen was no longer working for her I had to construct a better plan to meet her needs. The patient was described as no longer being able to sleep through the night due to her pain. I came up with a plan to utilize pain medications that also had sedating properties to first, control her pain and second, to help aide her to fall asleep and remain asleep throughout the night. I had to also come up with a plan to treat this patient’s excoriation. I first came up with not using soap and water to clean the excoriated area, because it can irritate the patient’s skin further. Instead I decided to use a combination of perineal skin cleanser and a skin protectant. Next, I decided that a hypoallergenic, transparent, breathable, moisturizing, easy to apply, and barrier cream also had a protective properties that would be best to treat the excoriation.

- **Nursing Practice**

  - **Applies appropriate knowledge of major health problems to guide nursing practice**
    
    o Example: Skin breakdown is a big nursing problem that is found in many of the different fields of nursing. This assignment had me explain how best to combat skin breakdown after it has occurred and how to try and prevent excoriation in the first place. Another big health problem is lack of educating the patient. For this assignment I instructed the patient on hospice care. I also explained why an advance directive is needed to ensure her children are taken care of by whom she chooses after she dies.

  - **Performs direct and indirect therapeutic interventions that incorporate principles of quality management and proper safety techniques based upon assessment findings**
    
    o Example: I had to assess my patient to obtain a thorough understanding of her pain and what this pain meant to her, and also how the pain affects her daily life. After obtaining a full understanding of the patient’s pain from my assessment I needed to figure out why her current pain regimen was no longer relieving her pain. After that I needed to decide on new interventions to help alleviate her pain. I also had to assess the patients excoriation and come up with an intervention to heal the excoriation and keep the patient as comfortable as possible. I used education as an
intervention to teach the patient about hospice and why an advance directive is important.

- **Implements traditional nursing care practices as appropriate to provide holistic health care to diverse populations across the lifespan**
  
  - Example: I used holistic care, in this assignment, for this young dying mother through pain management, palliative care, and education. I ensured that the patient’s care regimen involved pain management that was effective and safe. I ensured that the patient’s questions and fears were addressed thoroughly. I used holistic care when assessing the patient’s pain by addressing what the patient’s pain meant to her and her family. I assured the patient that there is no reason she should be in constant pain during her last days.

- **Demonstrates awareness of complementary modalities and their usefulness in promoting health**
  
  - Example: In this assignment the patient’s overall comfort was addressed. There are many ways to promote health. For this patient, pain relief was a huge part of promoting her health and overall well-being. Being in immense pain constantly can have a huge negative effect on a patient’s health. A patient may have a poor quality of life if they are in pain. It would be difficult for a patient to enjoy their time due to their pain. This assignment was all about relieving a patient’s pain and how that will be accomplished. This assignment even discussed how a pain regimen may need to be altered as time goes by because the patient may not be receiving adequate pain relief as they once did. This discussion board also dealt with the patient’s well-being in that all patients have questions and fears. Answering a patient’s questions and educating patients about end of life care can give a patient peace of mind; which can help the patient relax, relieve some of the patient’s stress, and help the patient to resume a happier state of mind. In this assignment I addressed big questions the patient had relating to end of life needs and care.

- **Communication**
  
  - **Uses therapeutic communication within the nurse-patient relationship**
    
    - Example: For this assignment I asked the patient many questions relating to her pain. I asked the patient what her pain felt like and gave her examples of descriptive words. I asked the patient how long she has been feeling the pain, location of the pain, whether or not the pain radiates to
other parts of her body, what makes her pain better and worse, and how her pain affects her daily life, including how it affects her quality of life. I asked what the patient’s pain meant to her and her family. I ensured that the patient comprehended the interventions that were going to take place to help relieve her pain and if she had any questions or concerns.

- ** Produces clear, accurate, and relevant writing using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation**
  - Example: For this assignment I received a 100%. My writing was clear, accurate, and relevant. I used appropriate, peer reviewed, current data to back up my thoughts. I used proper APA format along with appropriate punctuation, grammar, and spelling.

- **Accesses and utilizes data and information from a wide range of sources to enhance patient and professional communication**
  - Example: This discussion board was supposed to be a maximum of three pages. I used four references for this short paper to ensure my writing was accurate and complete.

**Teaching**

- **Provides teaching to patient and/or professionals about health care procedures and technologies in preparation for and following nursing or medical interventions**
  - Example: For this assignment I thoroughly explained to the patient her pain management regimen. This was so that the patient understood how she would be treated and that if this pain regimen is not working then a different strategy would need to be implemented. I discussed with the patient the importance of an advance directive. I informed the patient what could happen to her children if she did not have a living will for each individual child. I also educated this patient on what exactly hospice care is and that it is utilized to ensure the patient's overall comfort and care are addressed.

- **Provides relevant and sensitive health education information and counseling to patients, and families, in a variety of situations and settings**
  - Example: For this discussion board I counseled the patient and patient’s family care takers about her medication regimen, pain in general, and the importance of why her regimen must be followed at all times. I educated
the patient on how the court system worked for children when their parents died and there is not a living will in place. I then explained what a living will could ensure for the care of her children upon her death. I discussed hospice with the patient and how hospice can address the quality of her life with holistic care in her last days of life.

- *Uses information technologies and other appropriate methods to enhance one's own knowledge base*
  
  - Example: I had to learn what exactly hospice care was for this assignment. This was so that I could educate the patient on hospice. I also had to learn about an advance directive and the different parts involved in an advance directive. Specifically I learned about a living will and what a tool a living will can be. I did not realize that a living will is the best way to appoint guardianship of one’s children when one dies. I also had to learn about different pain medications, specifically morphine, and proper dosing for different routes of morphine, such as SQ morphine. This is so that I could help to change the patient’s pain and medication regimen so that she could have pain relief and sleep through the night.

- *Research*
  
  - *Applies research-based knowledge from nursing as the basis for culturally sensitive practice*
    
    - Example: In this assignment the patient was Hispanic. I discussed how the patient’s Hispanic culture should be taken into consideration when planning out her care. I explained how it is important to ask patients’ questions about their cultural and religious beliefs to ensure there is respect between the nurse and the patient. Also, this ensures that the patient receives the best appropriate care possible.

  - *Evaluates research that focuses on the efficacy and effectiveness of nursing interventions*
    
    - Example: For this discussion board I used peer reviewed current data along with my textbooks to come up with the best plan to relieve my patient’s pain, provide better sleep measures, treat her excoriation, and answer end of life questions that she needed answered.

- *Leadership*
- Delegates and supervises the nursing care given by others while retaining the accountability for the quality of care given to the patient.
  
  - Example: This was shown by educating the patient and their family on the patient’s pain management regimen and the importance of it being followed while the family is acting as care taker at home. This was to ensure that my patient’s care takers understood the situation and how pain management works, and also so that I could address any questions or fears they may have.

**Culture**

- Demonstrates sensitivity to personal and cultural definitions of health, and how these beliefs influence an individual’s reaction to the illness experience and end of life
  
  - Example: In this discussion board I took into consideration the patient’s Hispanic culture and discussed making sure that patient’s cultural beliefs would be regarded when planning her care, including assessments.