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Khaled Al Qawasmeh

President of Emirates Oncology Nursing Society, UAE

Innovative measures in Oncology Nursing Practice during COVID -19

Background: To date, there have been over 537 million cases worldwide of infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) that gives rise to COVID-19, with the number of deaths reaching over 6.3 Million as of 16 June 2022. Observed that the percentage of patients being admitted to intensive care units requiring ventilation, or ultimately dying, was 39% compared to 8% in non-cancer patients ($p=0.0003$).

Objectives: The pandemic crisis has changed the working environment and job requirements dramatically. Telehealth has replaced follow-up for non-urgent visits. Therefore, the need for a triage process for oncology facilities rapidly became essential for our clinical practice. The main objective of the project was to provide guidance to timely and appropriate care for patients with acute symptoms and to decrease the number of unnecessary visits to the hospital.

Methodology: Patients were informed about the phone service through posters, pamphlets, cards, and SMS texts. The telephone assessment tool used by nursing is based on a standardized Tool Kit from the UK Oncology Nurses Society (UKONS) that uses a Red, Amber and Green (RAG) scoring system. The study was implemented from July 2020 till Sep 2021

Results: In 14 months, 10,811 patients called 2656 cases related to COVID 19 issues; 9% of the calls were related to clinical symptoms, and 91% related to other reasons. An average of 15 patients per day, making a total of 471 patients called with clinical symptoms and were classified according to the RAG scoring system as follow: 102 Red, 183 Amber, and 186 Green; of the patients classified as red, 72 (61%) were told to present immediately to the Emergency Department. 89% of the respondent patients would have either called the physician (47%) or gone to the clinic (42%) without appointment if the phone service had not been available.

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Biography

Khaled Al Qawasmeh qualified with a Masters's Degree in Clinical Oncology nursing from the University of Pennsylvania, USA. He is Oncology Certified Nurse Since 2009. As a clinical research nurse, his job involves the coordination of clinical research studies. He has published in National and International peer-reviewed Journals, his main interest is in the field of Oncology.

khaled62@hotmail.com