Oncology Telephone Triage Workshop
Improving Nurse Knowledge, Skill, and Confidence
Kathryn Ciccolini AGACNP-BC, DNP, MSN, OCN, DNC
Advisor: Dr. Bryan Hansen PhD, RN, APRN-CNS, ACNS-BC

Introduction
Telephone triage in oncology is an essential practice as more cancer care has transitioned to the ambulatory setting in the last few decades.

The nurse (RN) is often the first point of contact through telephone triage and is responsible for proper symptom assessment and subsequent communication with a licensed independent practitioner.

There is no standardized training offered for this skill during orientation. It is imperative that oncology RNs have robust training embedded within nursing orientation as well as annual competency evaluation to ensure knowledge, confidence, and skill are maintained at an optimal level throughout employment.

Background
Standardized training → RN preparedness, confidence, skill and knowledge
(+1 patient outcomes)

Literature demonstrates effective training including interventions such as:

Two-day orientation
Role playing
Recording of potential calls
Case scenarios
Identification of personal competency

Telemedicine has been adopted in the healthcare community

Telemedicine has been supported by various professional organizations

Example telephone triage model recognized by AACN and ONS “nursing process”
Nursing process – interactive problem-solving process to provide individualized care.

Purpose & Aims

Purpose
To change office practice oncology RN knowledge, skill, and confidence in telephone triage using telephone triage models.

Project Aims
To determine if a telephone triage educational based intervention, specific to phone triage symptom management models, would change oncology RN’s (1) knowledge, (2) confidence, and (3) skill as measured by a prospective/pre/post test by 10% over a 12 week period.

Methods

Design: Quality improvement with pre- post test design

Setting: Outpatient Cancer Center Department of Hematology/Oncology

Framework: Johns Hopkins University EBP Model

Sample: n=13, convenience sampling

Inclusion Criteria: 1. Currently employed office practice RNs, part-time or full-time, 2. Office practice RNs working in oncology, 3. Must provide direct care to patients in the oncology setting, 4. Must provide telephone triage to patients in the oncology setting

Analysis Tools: Online survey: Confidence (n=2) & Knowledge (n=11). Skills checklist (n=56)

Intervention: Participants underwent a three-part evidence-based workshop over a 12 week period which included an online didactic lecture, an in-person group case scenario, and a virtual triage simulation with feedback. The intervention was developed based on evidence and led by the DNP student (K.C.)

Results

This QI project enrolled 13 oncology RN (Appendix B) primarily female (69.2%), most being over 31 years old (77%), having received a bachelor’s degree as highest level of education (100%). Out of 13 RNs, 69.3% had less than 10 years of RN experience, 53.8% had 0-4 years of oncology experience, and for both inpatient and outpatient, 69.2% had 0-4 years of experience. Lastly, 53.8% did not have telephone triage experience prior to this job, and 61.5% did not receive formalized training during orientation or any part of employment. A total of 13 RNs completed baseline data and 12 RNs completed the educational workshop.

Pre-test median knowledge score was 72.72% (IQR 18.18), post-test 72.72% (IQR 22.73). There was no difference in median knowledge scores from pre to post-test (p=0.11). Pre-test median confidence summary score was 3.00 (IQR 2.5), post-test 4.00 (IQR 0.75), summary difference score of 1.00 (IQR 2.75) reflecting an overall improvement from pre- to post-test (p=0.01). The median skill summary score pre-test was 49.12% (IQR 9.82), post-test 73.21% (IQR 12.05), summary difference score of 26.34% (IQR 15.18) reflecting an overall improvement (p = 0.00).

Conclusions

Oncology RNs are responsible for telephone triage and require standardized education and competency using telephone triage models. At present, there is no standardized training offered during employment. It is imperative that oncology RNs have a robust education embedded within orientation as well as annual competency evaluation to ensure knowledge, confidence, and skill are kept at an optimal level. This novel oncology telephone triage education model with e-learning and virtual simulation, translates evidence-based strategies into solutions, applies innovative technology to advance nursing practice, supports Magnet™ tenets and optimizes both nursing practice and patient outcomes.