Background

- The use of oral anticancer medications has dramatically risen over the past few years.
- Patients receiving IV chemotherapy are closely monitored for adverse effects, efficacy, and adherence. Nurses provide chemotherapy double check at the time of administration; this does not occur with patients on oral anticancer agents who are self-administering their medications.
- Patients on oral anticancer medications must practice the same level of adherence as supervised IV chemotherapy regimens. This includes and is not limited to taking the medication at the right time, taking the right dose, promptly reporting toxicities, safe handling of the medications, and knowing what to do if a dose is missed.
- Patients perceive oral anticancer medications as convenient with decreased adverse effects but oral anticancer regimens are often complex and are not free from toxicities.
- Risks of nonadherence increases when a patient is on oral anticancer medication and can lead to adverse consequences that can affect therapeutic outcomes and patient safety.
- The July 17, 2014 ISMP Medication Safety Alert describes the death of a patient due to oral chemotherapy overdose and is indicative of the need for more attention and efforts in ensuring patient safety for those on oral anticancer medication.
- The 2013 ONS/ASCO Chemotherapy Administration Safety Standards updated their guidelines to address the use of oral anticancer medications, including patient education on storage, handling, preparation, administration, and disposal of oral anticancer medications.

Methods

- Conducted a literature review on oral anticancer adherence and patient education which showed that patients receiving oral anticancer medications have more responsibility and that a collaborative communication effort between patients and health care providers best promotes adherence. Additionally, providing education and repeated teaching to patients on oral anticancer medications improves patient safety.
- Developed educational materials to meet the needs of patients receiving oral anticancer medications in accordance with the 2013 ONS/ASCO standards.
- Incorporated suggested revisions by the members of the oral anticancer patient safety committee, patient education committee, and CLISP team at the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center to the patient education materials.
- Reviewed and proposed changes to the Johns Hopkins chemotherapy, education and medication administration policies to meet the 2013 ONS/ASCO standards.
- Conducted a medical review for eight different oncology providers to analyze how they document monitoring/adherence for patients on oral anticancer medications.

Results

- Developed a general oral anticancer brochure, fact sheet and complimentary patient education video which describes what oral anticancer medications are, how to safely handle them, and how to manage side effects (see Figure 1 below).
- Hopkins chemotherapy policies do not address three guidelines that are outlined in the 2013 ASCO/ONS guidelines (see Table 1 below).
- Oncology attendings are not consistently documenting patient education, monitoring, and adherence for patients on oral anticancer medications in their treatment notes (see Table 2 below).
- Location of documentation of patient education, monitoring, and adherence varies between attendings and is not standardized (see Table 2 below).

Conclusions

- As the number of oral anticancer medications rise, cancer centers need to ensure patient safety and quality of care through patient education, side effects and efficacy monitoring, and adherence.
- The Oral Anticancer Patient Safety Committee at Johns Hopkins has taken the initiative to address the 2013 ASCO/ONS guidelines in regards to patient education and documentation for oral anticancer medications.
- As an interdisciplinary team, the committee has developed and implemented additional patient education resources for oral anticancer medications. However, the committee needs to continue to work to meet the documentation and monitoring guidelines outlined by ASCO/ONS.

Future Directions

- Develop additional patient education brochures, fact sheets, etc. for more specific oral anticancer medications.
- Update Hopkins’ Chemotherapy Policy to address oral anticancer medication administration and documentation as outlined by the 2013 ASCO/ONS updated standards.
- Standardize treatment notes so that patient education, monitoring, and adherence are all documented in the same location.

References


