

Integrating a Nursing Evidence-based toolkit to Improve Female Sexual Health in Gynecologic

Cancer Survivors

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On my honor, I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment. Courtney Beeckler

Abstract

Background: Vaginal stenosis and sexual dysfunction are side effects of therapeutic interventions for gynecologic cancers such as surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. In addition to being physically uncomfortable, these side effects can negatively impact a patient's overall quality of life, as well as reducing their provider's ability to detect local disease recurrence. Providers often lack knowledge on the topic and have discomfort with sexual health conversations, creating barriers to effective treatment. An integrated approach to promoting female sexual health has been shown to improve outcomes in gynecologic cancer survivors.

Objective: This quality improvement project implemented an educational session and toolkit in an effort to (1) improve provider attitude and knowledge about female sexual dysfunction and (2) prompt behavior change for routine sexual health screening.

Methods: This project utilized a one-group, pre-test/post-test design comparing summary scores from measurement tools to assess attitude and knowledge. Behavior change was measured by assessing the number of patient checklists created during follow up appointments.

Results: Attitude and knowledge both had a statistically significant improvement from pre-test to post-test, 11.08 vs. 12.92, $P=0.010$ and 9.67 vs. 11.08, $P=0.027$, respectively. Behavior change, with the creation of a new checklist, was seen in 46 of the 60 follow up appointments identified during the implementation period, representing a 76.7% compliance rate.

Conclusions: The study found that an educational session and toolkit improved attitude and knowledge and created a favorable behavior change for routine sexual health screening during follow up appointments.