Abstract

Background and Purpose: Oncology nurses are at increased risk for compassion fatigue (CF) compared to nurses in other specialties due to longer patient stays, higher patient mortality, and opportunities to form strong nurse-patient relationships. Even though CF in oncology nurses is well documented, there is great variability in the number of healthcare organizations in the United States which provide interventions to address CF. This quality improvement project sought to evaluate how a mindful self-compassion (MSC) intervention could influence CF and self-compassion levels in oncology nurses.

Methods: This project utilized a pre and post intervention design to compare the self-compassion and CF levels of 11 oncology nurses on two leukemia units at a large urban academic medical center in the mid-Atlantic region both before and after a 6-week MSC intervention was implemented. The intervention was 5-minute MSC practices which nurses could do as many times as they wanted during the 6 week intervention period. Self-compassion was measured by the Self-Compassion Scale and CF was measured using the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) 21. A Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to compare the pre and post intervention self-compassion and CF levels.

Results: A total of 11 nurses' self-compassion and CF levels who met inclusion criteria were included in data analysis. Results showed a non-significant decrease in CF (Md = 31.00 vs Md = 26.00, $p > 0.05$) and a significant increase in self-compassion (Md = 2.80 vs Md = 3.41, $p < 0.05$) after the intervention period.

Conclusions, Implications, and Keywords: This quality improvement project emphasizes the need for healthcare organizations to provide and allow oncology nurses to implement MSC practices into their workdays to increase self-compassion and decrease CF, which can influence

quality of patient care, patient safety, burnout, retention of staff, and more. Keywords:

compassion fatigue; oncology nurses; mindful self-compassion; self-compassion; mindfulness