

Head and Neck Cancer Patients As A Vulnerable Population

Name

Institution

Date

www.nursingtermpapers.com

Population

I will focus on Oral health disparities among the head and neck patients. My main focus on oral health is because, it is essential towards the general health of both individuals as well as the population in general.

Why this population is a special population

In the United States, there is a very significant oral health disparity, especially among head and neck cancer patients. This population has been considerable as a very vulnerable group with respect to oral health. Some other factors such as complex cultural as well as the social processes experienced in United States have been seen to have a great effect on the oral health as well as the dental health care of the patients suffering from head and neck cancer (Mehanna, Paleri, West, & Nutting, 2010).

Being in a position to reduce the health disparities of the vulnerable group is one of the key things by both public and private health agencies especially in the United States. There is evidence of both persistent as well as consequential disparities in the oral health among patients suffering from head and neck cancer in the United States. One of the main aims of the health institutions in United States is to be in a position to reduce the health disparities. Almost 25% of cancers in United States are head and neck cancers. Individuals with neck and head cancers are treated with radiotherapy and owing to the proximity of the head and neck to the dental system; the management has a negative impact on the dental system and consequently the oral health (Marur&Forastiere, 2008). Due to this fact, individuals suffering from head and neck cancer in respect to oral health are considered to be a special population.

Methods of reducing or eliminating oral health disparity in patients with Head and Neck Cancer

Some methods are being employed to reduce and eliminate oral health disparity among patients suffering from Head and Neck Cancer. Some of these methods include;

Healthcare redesigning to incorporate oral health care especially in the patient suffering from health and neck cancers to ensure that optimum care is given to them. The health care administrators needs to be in place a number of ways in which they will ensure that the health care systems can adequately cater for the needs of the patient who are especially suffering from head and neck cancers so as to ensure that their oral health is taken care of. More effort should also be put to ensure that the health facilities have well-trained staff who fully understands and are connected with the population with which they serve. This will help ensure that more emphasizes given on the management of patient as opposed to instances where the staff does not have a full understanding of the patients whom they are serving (Patrick et al., 2006).

CDC policy centered approach needs to be incorporated in the management of the patient. In respect to addressing the oral health disparities, the "Federal CDC REACH 2010 Program" approach should be used. This approach helps in addressing disparities among health by focusing on the six priority areas. Among the six priority areas cancers are one of the priorities outlined. The REACH project with respect to reducing and eliminating oral health disparity among the head and neck cancer patients, aims at representing a hybrid approach which is aimed at taking an account of the community coalitions as well as inputs from the community in a systematic manner with a key focus on promoting oral health and ensuring that the health disparity is eliminated completely. It will help in promoting community involvement as well as ensuring that each and every key mechanism is taken care of with respect to community development (Patrick et al., 2006).

Research should be used as another method for reducing or eliminating oral health disparity.

Researchers can collaborate with the community especially while collecting data in respect to the state of community health. Through research, new approaches as well as practices of the head and neck cancer patients aimed at helping them improve the ways through which they manage their dental health, are developed. Through research, new methods of treatment are discovered as well as new ways of taking care of the patients. Research also provides partnership between the patients, health care personnel and the researchers as well as helping in the establishment of a mutual relationship aimed at improving health outcomes (Patrick et al., 2006).

These methods will play a key role in reducing as well as eliminating the oral health disparities in patients suffering from head and neck cancers. These patients are considered as vulnerable to oral conditions due to their nature of the condition as well as its management. Redesigning of the health care, incorporating the CDC health-centered approach and incorporating research in the management of the patients will be very effective in improving patient's health outcomes. It is therefore of great importance to observe the methods above in order to record a better outcome in terms of patient's care as well as ensure optimum delivery of health services by the healthcare personnel (Patrick et al., 2006).

References

- Marur, S., &Forastiere, A. a. (2008). Head and neck cancer: *changing epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment*. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 83(4), 489–501.
- Mehanna, H., Paleri, V., West, C. M. L., & Nutting, C. (2010). Head and neck cancer--Part 1: *Epidemiology, presentation, and prevention*. *Bmj*, 341(sep20 1), c4684–c4684.
- Patrick, D. L., Lee, R. S. Y., Nucci, M., Grembowski, D., Jolles, C. Z., &Milgrom, P. (2006). Reducing oral health disparities: *a focus on social and cultural determinants*. *BMC Oral Health*, 6 Suppl 1, S4.