

## FEATURE ARTICLE

# Implementation of a Prechemotherapy Educational Intervention for Women Newly Diagnosed With Breast Cancer

Jill S. Keller, MSN, FNP, APRN-BC, OCN®

Women newly diagnosed with breast cancer often are misled by false information regarding treatments and side effects. Web sites can be filled with graphic stories and false information about chemotherapy. Research has examined how patients handle the side effects of chemotherapy physically and emotionally during treatment. No standardized prechemotherapy intervention has been developed to assist patients with breast cancer preparing for chemotherapy. A 30-minute educational intervention provided by nurses before the start of chemotherapy may assist women in increasing their knowledge of chemotherapy treatment, enhancing their ability to manage side effects and improving their coping strategies.

In 2005, approximately 211,240 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer, with another 58,490 predicted to be diagnosed with breast cancer in situ (American Cancer Society, 2005a). Since the 1980s, breast cancer incidence has continued to rise at an alarming rate. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women; however, death rates have been decreasing, which has been attributed to early detection and advances in treatment (American Cancer Society, 2005a). Treatment options include surgery with or without reconstruction, preoperative and/or postoperative chemotherapy, radiation, and hormone therapies.

Research has demonstrated that patients use different coping behaviors depending on the threat of the illness (Dunkel-Schetter, Feinstein, Taylor, & Falke, 1992; Lev, 1992). Most women newly diagnosed with breast cancer are unprepared for their illness and have little or no idea how to cope with their diagnosis. They may look to the Internet, where nonscientific information on cancer treatment may be found. Treatment options and drug therapies can be confusing. Often, patients who undergo chemotherapy do not receive information from a nurse regarding their treatment until the day they begin treatment. Educating patients regarding the type of chemotherapy they will receive, how often they will receive it, and the side effects to expect physically and emotionally can provide patients with a basic understanding of their health care before the start of chemotherapy and may improve their ability to cope with the illness.

## Providing Cancer Education

An educational resource kit was designed and provided to women newly diagnosed breast cancer (Samarel et al., 1999). Developed around the Roy Adaptation Model of Nursing (Roy

### At a Glance

- ◆ Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women; however, early detection and advances in treatment have helped to lower the death rate.
- ◆ The availability of different treatment options can be confusing, and the Internet can provide false, nonscientific information.
- ◆ Educating women regarding the different aspects of their chemotherapy may help to improve their ability to cope with breast cancer.

& Andrews, 1991), the kit focused on physiological well-being, self-concept, role function, and interdependence in patients. The model could be used independently by women two to three months after diagnosis or by nurses as a guide when providing support over the telephone or during a breast cancer support group. The tool was not recommended for women who had just been diagnosed because it was believed to be an overwhelming amount of information.

Breast care nurse counselors in the United Kingdom provided support to patients before and after initial consultation with a surgeon (Ambler et al., 1999). Patients in the intervention were found to have an increased understanding of treatments and

---

Jill S. Keller, MSN, FNP, APRN-BC, OCN®, is an advanced practice nurse at Oncology Hematology Care Associates in Milford, CT. (Submitted April 2005. Accepted for publication June 21, 2005.)

Digital Object Identifier: 10.1188/06.CJON.57-60