

Nursing Management of Patients with Difficult Physical Symptoms: Nausea-Vomiting (N&V)

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The overall aim of the presentation is the familiarization of the conferees with the nurse’s role in the pharmacological and non-pharmacological management of Nausea and Vomiting in patients with cancer.

Intended learning outcomes:

Familiarizing the conferees with the nurse’s role in the pharmacological and non-pharmacological management of Nausea and Vomiting in patients with cancer.

Understanding the physiology and mechanisms of Nausea and Vomiting.

Demonstrating the value of non-pharmacological techniques in the management of N&V.

Nausea and vomiting are among the most common and distressing symptoms that patients with cancer endure, both as a result of antineoplastic treatment and from the disease itself (Rhodes and McDaniel 2001). It is estimated that 20-60 per cent of patients with advanced cancer will experience nausea and vomiting (Allan, 1999; Grond et al, 1994;), with latest statistics showing further increase.

Nausea and vomiting are often regarded as a single entity, but they are separate physiological conditions (Eckert, 2001). Nausea is defined as “*an unpleasant feeling in the back of the throat and stomach that may or may not result in vomiting*” (Rhodes & McDaniel, 2004, p.1). Vomiting is defined as “*a forceful contraction of the abdominal (stomach) muscles to cause stomach contents to come up through the mouth*” (Rhodes & McDaniel, 2004, p.1).

Nurses have a significant role in assessing symptoms, measuring the response to antiemetics and providing non-pharmacological treatments.