Nursing Assessment of Patients with Diagnosed Lung Cancer

L. Knorr, L. Farling, S. Almokadem, T. Kuhlengel, J.W. Toth and R. Bascom
Penn State University College of Medicine Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

1. Background
A new diagnosis of lung cancer thrusts patients into a bewildering, medically complex world with a new multidisciplinary multispecialty group providing evaluation and treatment. We focused this assessment on patients diagnosed with lung cancer within the last 6 months.

2. Hypothesis
We hypothesize that a structured nursing assessment will identify information gaps and provide direction for developing a patient-centered lung cancer initiative at our institution.

3. Materials and Methods
Patients attending the recently established multidisciplinary lung cancer clinic at the Penn State Cancer Institute consented to the completion of a questionnaire seeking demographic characteristics, personal smoking history, as well as information on their knowledge of lung cancer, reaction to diagnosis, perceived information needs and desired method of obtaining information.

4. Patient Characteristics
Twenty-three patients completed the questionnaire. Patients averaged 67±10 years old; M:F ratio was 13:10. 8/23 had high school graduates, and 6/23 had post-high school education. 91% reported having a primary care doctor. Urban:rural residence ratio was 9:14. Eighty-three percent of patients reported their parents had "ever smoked", while 87% had ever lived in a household with regular tobacco smoke exposure and 87% had ever been exposed to tobacco smoke at work. Over half had no idea what proportion of tobacco smokers develop lung cancer; the remaining estimated a median of 50%. All patients reported believing they had lung cancer and 21/23 reported being aware of their prognosis.

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References