Pain Assessment in Palliative Care

By: Janane Hanna
RN, BSN, MSN, AOCNS
Pain Clinical Nurse Specialist
Objectives

- At the end of this session, participants will be able to:
  - Define pain
  - Identify parameters of pain assessment
  - Explain the concept of total pain
  - Identify examples of physiological, spiritual, psychological, social pain
Outline

- Significance of the problem
- Definition of pain
- Pain assessment
- Tools for pain assessment
- Concept of total pain
  - Physical pain
  - Psychological pain
  - Spiritual pain
  - Social pain
- Conclusion
Pain statistics

- 50% Early stages of disease
- 75% advanced cancer
- 33% in cancer survivors

(Adapted from International Association of the Study of Pain, 2009)

- In Lebanon the number of new cancer patients is estimated to be between 3500–4000 yearly.
- 95 patients were registered to receive morphine in 1995

(Daher et al., 2002)
What is Pain?
IASP definition of Pain...

“An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage.”
Pain is...

"Pain is what the _person_ says it is, existing when and where the _person_ says it does."

McCaffery & Beebe definition since 1968
Pain assessment is the cornerstone for optimal pain management
Parameters of Pain Assessment

- Location
- Intensity
- Quality
- Duration
- Frequency
- Aggravating factors
- Alleviating factors
Tools for pain intensity

- **Self Report**
  - Numeric rating scale (NRS)
  - Verbal Descriptive Scale (VDS)
  - Visual Analog Scale (VAS)
  - Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS)
  - Functional index

- Patients unable to self report
  - CPOT
  - Behavioral pain tool
Total Pain (Cicely Saunders)
Total pain

Co-morbid causes
Caused by treatment
Caused by cancer

Anxiety
Fear of suffering
Depression
Past experience of illness

Physical
Psychological

Loss of role and social status
Loss of job
Financial concerns
Worries about future of family
Dependency

Anger at fate/anger with God
Loss of faith
Finding meaning
Fear of the unknown
Physical Pain

- Physical pain is due to
  - cancer
  - treatment
  - Comorbid causes

- It could be
  - Nociceptive
    Normal processing of pain stimuli
    - Somatic
    - visceral
  - Neuropathic
    Abnormal processing of sensory input
Physical Pain Interventions

- **Pharmacological**
  - Opioid
  - Nonopiod
  - Adjuvants

- **Nonpharmacological**
  - Aromatherapy
  - Massage
  - Acupuncture/Acupressure
  - Music therapy
  - Art therapy
  - Thermal energy
  - Distraction
Psychological Pain

- Anger
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fear of suffering
- Past experience of illness
Psychological Pain Interventions

- Pharmacological
  - Anxiolytics
  - Antidepressants

- Nonpharmacological
  - Seek professional counseling
  - Share feelings with friends, family & healthcare professionals
  - Explore inspirational & spiritual texts
Spiritual Pain

- Regrets
- Unforgiveness
- No meaning or purpose in life
- Anger at fate/ anger with god
- Loss of faith
- Fear of the unknown
Spiritual Pain Interventions

- Pharmacological
  - NO PILL

- Nonpharmacological
  - Forgive & ask for forgiveness
  - Discuss regrets
  - Life review to find purpose in life
  - Talk to chaplain/spiritual support clergy
Spiritual assessment tool (HOPE)

- H (source of hope)
- O (organized religion)
- P (personal spirituality, spiritual practices)
- E (effects on medical care and/or end of life issues)
Social Pain

- Loss of role
- Loss of job
- Financial concerns
- Worries about future of family
- Dependency
Social Pain interventions

- Pharmacological
  - No Pill

- Nonpharmacological
  - Write letters/cards
  - Legacy building
  - Complete a legal will
  - Consult social worker
“I am fortunate too, above all, in being a doctor who is not in a hurry, so that I have time to know and to enjoy my patients”

(Cicely Saunders, 1961)
Thank you
References