

Nursing Case Study: Breast Cancer

I. Introduction

This nursing case study presents the care of a 47-year-old female patient diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer. The goal is to demonstrate nursing assessment, patient-centered interventions, and emotional support strategies for individuals facing cancer treatment. The case emphasizes symptom management, education, and psychosocial care during the pre- and postoperative period.

2. Patient Description

- **Name:** Mrs. A. (pseudonym for confidentiality)
- **Age:** 47 years
- **Gender:** Female
- **Marital Status:** Married
- **Occupation:** Accountant
- **Living Situation:** Lives with spouse and one teenage daughter
- **Medical History:** Hypertension controlled with medication, no previous surgeries
- **Lifestyle Factors:** Non-smoker, moderate exercise routine, healthy diet

3. Clinical Presentation

Mrs. A. sought medical attention after discovering a firm lump in her left breast during self-examination. A mammogram and biopsy confirmed invasive ductal carcinoma, stage IIA. She was scheduled for a left-sided lumpectomy followed by adjuvant chemotherapy. At the time of assessment, she reported anxiety, fear of surgery, and difficulty sleeping.

4. Patient Assessment

Assessment included physical evaluation and emotional screening. The surgical site was examined for potential postoperative care needs. Vital signs were stable. The patient verbalized fear about body image changes and possible side effects of chemotherapy. Family support was present but limited by her husband's work schedule. The nurse identified anxiety, knowledge gaps about treatment, and a need for coping strategies.

5. Nursing Diagnoses / Problems

1. Anxiety related to cancer diagnosis and anticipated treatment
2. Knowledge deficit regarding surgical and chemotherapy procedures
3. Disturbed body image related to potential changes after lumpectomy
4. Risk for infection related to surgical wound and chemotherapy-induced immunosuppression
5. Fatigue related to emotional stress and treatment effects

6. Nursing Care Plan

Goal 1: Reduce anxiety before and after surgery

- Provide clear explanations about each step of treatment.
- Encourage expression of fears and concerns in a supportive setting.
- Offer relaxation techniques such as slow breathing and guided imagery.

Goal 2: Improve understanding of diagnosis and treatment

- Explain procedures and possible side effects in simple language.
- Provide written materials and visual aids about chemotherapy and wound care.
- Reinforce instructions before discharge to ensure comprehension.

Goal 3: Promote body image adjustment

- Discuss potential physical changes openly and with sensitivity.
- Encourage use of clothing or accessories that help maintain confidence.
- Refer to a support group for breast cancer survivors.

Goal 4: Prevent postoperative and chemotherapy-related infection

- Monitor incision for redness, swelling, or discharge.
- Educate on proper hand hygiene and wound care.
- Advise on avoiding crowded areas during periods of low immunity.

7. Implementation and Documentation

The nurse implemented relaxation techniques daily and encouraged journaling for emotional release.

Teaching sessions covered surgical wound care, chemotherapy expectations, and nutrition during recovery. Documentation included patient participation, understanding, and emotional status after each session. Collaboration with the oncology team ensured consistency in care.

8. Evaluation

After one week, anxiety levels decreased as the patient expressed better understanding of her treatment. She reported improved sleep and a sense of control over her recovery. The surgical wound healed without complications, and she followed infection prevention practices accurately. Body image concerns persisted but were being addressed through ongoing counseling.

9. Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality was strictly maintained. The nurse provided truthful information without creating fear. Consent was obtained before every procedure. Respect for dignity and emotional comfort guided all interactions.

10. Reflection

This case reinforced the importance of combining medical care with emotional and educational support. Breast cancer treatment challenges both the body and self-perception. Through empathy, education, and collaboration, nurses help patients regain confidence and manage their recovery with resilience.