

Implementing a Smoking-Cessation Programme

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Nurses play a key role as mentors in prevention

The Catalan Institute of Oncology (ICO) has been a smoke-free centre since 1998. This centre, the first one in the Catalonia region to designate itself as smoke-free, is responsible for directing, coordinating and promoting the smoke-free initiative to other Catalan health-care centres and institutes.

One of the main objectives of the initiative is to decrease the number of smokers among health-care workers, mainly among nurses. To achieve this, we started a smoking-cessation program based on a mentoring process. This process allows the person to relearn and mature during the process of stopping to smoke. During a six month period, six nurses trained in strategies to promote cessation of smoking gave personal support to other health-care workers at the centre who were trying to kick the habit. To accomplish this, they first assessed the stage of the person according to the change phases as described by the Proshaska and Diclemente model. Next, they determined the individual's physical dependence on tobacco using the Fageström test, the individual's social and psychological reliance on tobacco, as described by Russell, and last but not least, they explored the individual's daily tobacco consumption.

Once the diagnostic process was completed, mentor and mentee together developed a mutually agreed-upon plan for the mentee to follow to quite smoking. As part of the plan, they agreed to meet for a minimum of 8 sessions within 24 weeks; a maximum number of encounters was not set. A daily schedule was developed taking into account any weak moments the individual might encounter and enhancing the strong points of the person with the purpose of

limiting any prospective difficulties. The mentor serves not only as the therapist, but also as a source of personal support for the smoker during the sometimes difficult process of quitting. An important role of the mentor is to provide advice to help the individual choose the best options to achieve his goal. Further, the mentor works with the individual to set objectives and to plan the appropriate steps to reach them. As a counsellor, the mentor helps the mentee to recognize and develop self control capacities such as confidence and self-esteem. Last but not least, the mentor provides the individual with feedback on his progress.

The project was pilot-tested for 6 months. Sixteen nurses were included in the pilot, 4 of them discontinued their participation before the intervention had been initiated. The remaining 12 nurses were followed by one nurse during their smoking-cessation process. The profiles of the group were as follows: moderate dependence on tobacco with a median Fageström score of 4.7; a median of 15.67 (SD = ± 5.52) cigarettes smoked per day. 41.7% of the participants had already attempted to quite smoking. During the six-month course of the project, 5 of the 16 participants (31.25%) did not smoke. Mentoring is a useful methodology to offer support to nurses who are trying to quit smoking. The programme we developed had a level of success similar to other smoking-cessation interventions. More research on this topic, as specifically applied to nurses, is needed. The project should be implemented in other centres to validate our results. Moreover, we recommend that this type of intervention should be offered to other health-care workers in our hospital who are also smokers and policies to promote health and smoke-free environments should be implemented.

EONS announces EPE Award Winner for 2005

Earlier on this year EONS launched the Excellence in Patient Education (EPE) Award with the aim of honouring individual nurses or organisations that have consistently excelled at enlightening cancer patients about their disease and its treatments and encouraging creative and cutting-edge approaches to the development of patient education materials.

The winner of the 2005 EPE Award is the Oncology Unit at Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children (OLHSC), Dublin, Ireland for the booklet "Precious Times: a Handbook on Palliative Care for Parents and Children with Cancer". This original, comprehensive and highly relevant booklet conveys a deep sense of empathy and care towards parents of children who are dying. It is easy to read and written with a warm, balanced tone – an incredible achievement given the sensitivity of the topic. The authors have taken great care in the way they have portrayed this important topic and tackled the most sensitive aspects. The judicious use of pictures (drawn by children) and quotes from parents, siblings and children help clarify some difficult concepts. Moreover, the booklet contains very practical information and useful advice to help guide parents through this challenging life experience. It is written by a multi-professional team of nurses and social workers and is all the more useful because of this. Members of the EPE Judging Panel were unanimous in their praise for this booklet and in their decision to confer the 1st EPE Award to the team from the Oncology Unit at OLHSC. Fiona O'Loughlin and Miriam Mooney from the Oncology Unit at

OLHSC were presented with the Award at a special ceremony that was held during ECCO-13. The winners gave a presentation outlining the rationale behind developing the booklet and the support that it has given parents.

At the Award ceremony a special tribute was paid to the work on Gertrud Grahn, one of the pioneers in the development of group educational programmes. Her world-renowned initiative "Learning to Live with Cancer" has been implemented in over 15 European countries – thousands of European patients have benefited from this unique programme.

EONS is pleased to announce that the EPE Award will continue over the next few years with sponsorship from Amgen (Europe) GmbH. A Nomination Form for the 2006 Award can be downloaded from the EONS website at:
http://www.cancerworld.org/cancerworld/home.aspx?id_sito=2&id_stato=1

The 2006 EPE Award winner will receive a commemorative certificate and a cash award of € 1000, as well as have the right to print the EONS Excellence in Patient Education logo on the winning patient materials. The Award is open to individual nurses or organisations that have developed original and high quality patient education materials targeted at cancer patients. Nominations were judged on their ability to develop creative and innovative materials that clearly communicate relevant and accurate information to patients and their families. Further information is available from the EONS secretariat.

