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Abstract:

Retrospective Review of Impact of Nursing Care on Patients Receiving Accelerated Partial Breast Irradiation (APBI) at Virginia Hospital Center

To evaluate nursing care by radiation oncology nurses for breast cancer patients treated with APBI.

Oncology nurses need to be knowledgeable about APBI used to treat some women with early stage breast cancer. After determining eligibility, breast surgeons implant an intracavitary catheter within the lumpectomy site and patients come twice daily for 10 fractions over 5 days. A growing population diagnosed with low risk breast cancer can be treated effectively in a shorter time period and to a smaller treatment volume compared to up to 6-7 weeks of standard whole breast irradiation.

This abstract describes the radiation nurses' role and describes data from treated APBI patients used to evaluate nursing care.

To date over 350 patients were treated with APBI at Virginia Hospital Center. Nurses play a critical role as patient educators and skilled clinicians during treatment. Written evidence-based guidelines, started with the first patient in 2008, continue to be reviewed and revised to reflect best practices. Nurses teach patients catheter care to prevent infections, the most common complication. They use topical and prophylactic oral antibiotics. Nurses take clinical photos, administer patient surveys, and refer patients to subspecialties and resources for comprehensive care.

Data from patients' medical records related to nursing care for the first 150 patients with a Strut Adjusted Volume Implant (SAVI) catheter device was compiled into a database. The project appears to support the strength of nursing patient education and infection prevention as evidenced by a 2% superficial skin infection rate. These resolved with topical Nystatin in all three patients. There were otherwise no infected seromas. Mild discomfort related to catheter position was reported in 26% of the patients. Only 1% of these patients required narcotic pain control. Nursing assessments with prompt attention to adverse side effects and patient concerns were reflected in internal patient surveys and 99% patient satisfaction scores on independent Press Ganey ratings.

Radiation oncology nurses should continue to evaluate and improve nursing care of patients receiving APBI.