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CONFERENCE UPDATE

10th International Paediatric Haematology and Oncology Update Meeting
18–19 May 2006
Edinburgh
Details: www.iphoum.com

PONF Conference 2006
Supportive care for children and young people with cancer
13–14 July 2006
Nottingham University
Details:
sara.chadwick@rmh.nhs.uk

International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP) Conference
18–21 September 2006
Geneva
Details: www.siop.nl/siop2006

Further information

Send contributions for the next issue by 6 September 2006 to the Editor :

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Thanks to LIZ AULD and FAITH GIBSON for this article, written on behalf of the UKCCSG/PONF working group.

New UKCCSG/PONF mouth care guidelines:

At last, a comprehensive evidence-based approach to oral hygiene for children with cancer

Oral complications remain one of the most challenging cancer-related symptoms to manage.¹

While there is no disputing that regular oral care is essential in reducing the detrimental effects of a compromised oral cavity, the evidence supporting interventions for the prophylaxis and treatment of oral mucositis is less certain.^{2,3}

We know that careful oral management of children and young people treated for cancer can improve quality of life during treatment. However, there is “confusion and conflict” surrounding what constitutes appropriate mouth care,⁴ and at present no clear guidelines exist outlining the optimal oral care strategy for our patients.

Despite the lack of research evidence regarding what constitutes effective basic oral hygiene and what dental care is appropriate for children being treated for cancer, a recent survey⁵ showed little variation in the advice given to parents/patients.

A multidisciplinary guideline development team

was established in 2001 in collaboration with the United Kingdom Childhood Cancer Study Group (UKCCSG) and the Paediatric Oncology Nurses Forum (PONF), with financial support from CLIC Sargent.

This mouth care group used the agreed methodology of SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network)⁶ to develop evidence-based guidelines. Their principal aim was to produce comprehensive evidence-based guidelines on mouth care for children and adolescents being treated for cancer. The potential benefits of such guidelines include improved patient care, consistency of care, the promotion of interventions of proved benefit and reduction in use of ineffective or potentially harmful practices.

A consensus approach was used to establish the scope and basic structure of the guidelines, covering three key areas:

- dental care and basic oral hygiene

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THE GOOD IDEAS GROUP: now that's a great idea!

Have you visited the PONF/ UKCCSG Good Ideas Group website yet? Here's where you can find “ideas” relating to a variety of practice that may help you in your care of children with cancer. Just click on the link for the group at www.ukccsg.org.uk, then enter the user name “PONF” and password “gig101”. You should then be able to read the ideas and get forms for sending in you own ideas in the future. Soon you will be able to access most documents directly for the web pages rather than through the individuals' contact details. And do let us have any comments or thoughts about the website to enable it to meet our needs.

Karen Selwood

What's new on the web ...

Have you visited the PONF website?

You'll find it at www.rcn.org.uk/cypzone in the RCN Children and Young People Zone. This newsletter is now online along with lots of other extra information so have a look and let us know what you think – we want it to be useful!

Online course for nurses new to paediatric oncology

A new course relating to caring for children and young people with cancer has been launched online through www.cancernursing.org

The course was developed by members of the Paediatric Oncology

Nurse Education Group (PONE) and first launched on 1 November 2005. It's aimed at nurses new to children's cancer care and helps develop their knowledge base in this subject area. It consists of modules of learning with test opportunities, a learning log and helpful further reading – all that, and it's also free!

To date 598 learners from 66 countries have registered. Their feedback suggests the course has helped a range of learners from student nurses and newly qualified staff nurses to allied health professionals. Do encourage your new staff to give it a go and also fill in the feedback sheets so we can continuously improve the course. (Helen Langton)

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- methods of oral assessment
- drugs and therapies.

A systematic review of the literature in these three areas was undertaken. In cases where no evidence existed, such as basic oral hygiene, a Delphi survey enabled practitioners to reach a consensus on best practice. The results of the data extraction process were used to develop evidence tables that included grading of recommendations. Recommendations were then provisionally approved by the Mouth Care Group prior to an extensive peer review process.

Two documents have been produced:

- *The methodological report* details all methods used throughout the guideline development process as a reference document
- *The guideline report*, an abbreviated document, focuses the recommendations to be available on the ward and clinical areas.

The guideline report will be distributed shortly to each UKCCSG centre and together with *The methodological report* will also be available to download from the UKCCSG and PONF websites at www.ukccsg.org and www2.rcn.org.uk/cyp/forums/rcn_professional_forums/oncology

In addition, *At a glance guidelines*, a user-friendly document, provides a summary of the key issues.

To help with implementing the guidelines, centres may need to review current practice against the guideline recommendations and assess any differences. Recommendations

may also need to be interpreted at local level to allow for variations in organisation of care. Suggestions for approaches to implementation are described in both reports. If you require any further information, contact us at elizabeth.auld@cmmc.nhs.uk or Gibsof@gosh.nhs.uk

References

- ¹Gibson, F (2004) Best practice in oral care for children and young people being treated for cancer: can we achieve consensus? editorial, *European Journal of Cancer*, 40 (8), pp.1,109–1,110.
- ²Kowanko, I; Long, L; Hodgkinson, B and Evans, D (1998) *The effectiveness of strategies for preventing and treating chemotherapy and radiation induced oral mucositis in patients with cancer*, report, Adelaide, Australia: The Joanna Briggs Institute for Evidence Based Nursing and Midwifery.
- ³Clarkson, JE; Worthington, HV and Eden, OB (2004) Interventions for preventing oral mucositis for patients with cancer receiving treatment, *Cochrane Review*, The Cochrane Library, 4, Oxford: Update Software.
- ⁴Miller, M and Kearney, N. (2001) Oral care for patients with cancer: a review of the literature, *Cancer Nurse*, 24 (4), pp.241–254.
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- ⁶The Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) at www.sign.ac.uk (Internet) (Accessed 14.3.06).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As one participant said: "It has inspired me to become more involved in change and not to assume others would take the lead."

RCN Leadership Programme in Primary Care and Public Health

Do you work in a setting outside hospital? Are you keen to develop your sphere of influence?

Is health improvement a main element of your role? Are you ready to tackle health inequality in your local population and community? If these questions ring a bell with you, then this innovative leadership development programme will help you achieve these changes! This is an action oriented and influential five-day development programme, designed to develop the strategic leadership skills of health professionals whose work is concerned with developing needs-led person- and community-based services. The focus is on identifying and addressing the health needs and inequalities of the population, promoting health and working across boundaries to commission, develop and deliver effective services. It will help you develop the teamwork, partnership and cross-boundary working skills necessary to ensuring a common vision.

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