

# The Chemotherapy Patient

## A Pharmacist's Perspective on Quality Management

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When a patient arrives for chemotherapy treatment at the Clinic, they are assessed and bloods taken. If all is satisfactory the Pharmacy proceed with making up the chemotherapy and release the treatment after blood results have been obtained and are deemed satisfactory.

Referral/diagnosis at the clinic is very much part of the process with the patients being involved in every stage of the decision-making process. The clinical team includes clinical oncologists, medical oncologists, surgeons, oncology nurse specialists, pharmacists, radiologists and pathologists.

Clinical audit is a key clinical governance area within the planning, treatment and follow up of Parkside Oncology patients. We have a Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) which meets regularly four times a year, overseeing clinical audit, the introduction of new therapies and the dissemination of NICE guidelines. The MAC also manages all radiotherapy and chemotherapy plans and protocols with feedback through meetings and audit.

Before any chemotherapy treatment regimes begin, the Oncologist discusses the patients' requirements with the specialist nurses and pharmacists. A proforma is submitted with any references and related evidence based literature to ensure that all practice is safe and appropriate. Pharmacy staff then drawn up prescribing protocols which are then used for prescribing chemotherapy for the patients. These proformas are also entered on to an electronic prescribing system which manages both chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatments for individual patients.

### Chemotherapy treatment

Following any necessary preliminary tests and discussions, the optimum treatment regimen is assigned for each individual patient ensuring it best meets all their needs, especially in regards to any associated therapy such as anti-emetics, management of side effects and any other related medical therapy.

There is a state-of-the-art Pharmacy Aseptic Unit specifically designed and built for cytotoxic reconstitution on-site at the Clinic. This service enables us to provide a timely, safe, and responsive Pharmacy service. A specialist oncology Pharmacist approves prescriptions, checks appropriateness of therapy, and manages patients' take home medications. Approved standard operating procedures are adhered to at all times. Worksheets and labels for every individual chemotherapy dose are computerised and produced to ensure that each patient receives the exact dose prescribed in the correct diluent and packaging. Expiry dates and compatibilities are all part of this multiple process. Chemotherapy can be given in a variety of different ways including bolus injections, infusions and 24 hour continuous ambulatory pumps as well as oral therapy.

The Pharmacy Aseptic Unit underwent a full commissioning process prior to opening and is continually

maintained to a very high standard by the management of a comprehensive maintenance programme including:

- physical and biological environmental monitoring, quarterly external audits
- daily monitoring of humidity, filter and air pressures, temperatures and microbiological levels.

Pharmacy staff also provide patients with a dispensing service to ensure that every patients' medication needs are met on-site. Patients discuss their medication with the Pharmacist at each visit and problems can be identified such as mouthcare, sickness or any other medicine related issue. All medicines dispensed are accompanied by an information sheet to help patients take, and get the most out of their treatment with minimal side-effects.

### Knowledge Through Support

The on-site Information Centre plays an important role in the Clinic's holistic approach to patient care and that of their relatives. Information on all types of cancer and cancer-related disease can be accessed through literature, leaflets, booklets, video tapes, the internet, cancer charities and local self help groups. Information on health, diet, complementary therapies; aromatherapy, reflexology and therapeutic massage is readily available. Advice on the role of the Clinic's psychological counselling staff is provided through the Information Coordinator.

