

Case Study 4: N.J.

Scenario

N.J. is a 65-year-old widow who lives alone. She has a long history of type 2 diabetes and hypertension. N.J. is not employed. She has very limited savings and relies on Social Security benefits for income. She smokes about half a pack of cigarettes a day and has been a smoker since she was in her 20s. She drinks alcohol “a couple of times a year, usually a glass of wine at a special dinner.”

N.J. has a sore on her ankle that she has noticed for the last several months. The sore does not hurt much, but she has been unable to get it to heal. The cashier at the convenience store tells her that she should use butter to help heal wounds because the butter keeps the wound moist and helps to enhance healing.

N.J. decides to follow the cashier's advice and applies butter to her wound for a week. The wound does not seem to be getting any better; in fact, it looks worse. It now has yellowish drainage, and the skin around the wound has become red. Her foot also hurts when she walks on it. N.J. stops the butter treatment and goes to the emergency department.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the priority nursing diagnoses for N.J.?
 - Risk for infection
 - Knowledge Deficient
 - Ineffective health management
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
 - Explain to her she should not apply butter to her foot again.
 - Teach her the signs and symptoms of infection (drainage, pain, redness, warmth, etc.)
 - Teach her the importance it would be to stop drinking and smoking.
 - Teach her that she could save the money she's spending on cigarettes on something more beneficial for her health
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
 - Get them in contact with a case manager
 - Community recourses
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
 - More understanding of proper care for her sore.
 - She is more educated on when she should seek medical help.
 - I also expect for her infection to be gone.