

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.?

Treat peripheral artery disease help reduce the risk of amputation.

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?

Management of her smoking and hypertension can help reduce the effects of PAD. She should cut down on the smoking and try to maintain a healthy diet.

3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?

Talk to N.J. regarding her availability to the needed medical supplies needed to treat her diabetes. She may be unable properly treat her condition because of the expenses. If so, try to set her up with a social worker who can guide in finding assistance so that she can properly manage her disease. If her diabetes is not controlled, she will continue to face further medical problems. She may also need help with getting medication to treat the sensory neuropathy.

4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?

N.J.

The wound should be examined to ensure that proper healing has occurred. There should also be follow-up on proper diet and smoking habits. Also, test for sensory improvement.