

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 diagnosis for N.J.?

The priority nursing diagnosis would be type 2 diabetes which has led to her foot ulcer.

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?

I would provide her with foot care teaching, how smoking can affect diabetes, and how to manage her type 2 diabetes.

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

I can get case management for her requirements to help with medical equipment and cost of care considering she is not employed and relies on SSI benefits.

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

I would anticipate for N.J. to use proper foot care to heal her wound, take action for her diabetes, and to limit her smoking as well as scheduling yearly check ups.