

## **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.?**

Deficient knowledge of diabetic neuropathy, wound care, and impaired skin integrity.

**2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?**

I will teach her how to care for her current wound by teaching how to keep it clean to avoid infection. I will also teach her to prevent new wounds from happening by checking her feet throughout the day, checking her shoes for pebbles or anything that can cause a break in her skin, and using lotion to prevent dry and cracked feet. I will also explain the importance of the use of prescribed medication and good blood glucose control.

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

I can find programs that assist with financial help and find free and charitable clinics N.J. could also go to for care. I can also contact a social worker who can help set up a payment plan for treatment, and who could also help her apply for Medicare or any insurance that will help cover costs for medications, supplies, and treatment.

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

I anticipate for N.J. to be discouraged to move forward with her follow-up care, because she may find it difficult to want to try to find a way to pay for her care due to her unemployment, limited savings, and her source of income.