

## **6Case 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.?

#### **Potential for Local and Systemic Infection**

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
  - **Importance of daily skin, wound, and foot care.**
  - **Consult physician before applying anything to an open wound.**
  - **Make sure the patient can change her dressing and observe if the patient is doing it right.**
  - **S/S of infection, improvement, or deterioration in wound status.**
  - **Diet that promotes wound healing, like consuming adequate protein and calorie intake.**
  - **Explain the importance of taking pain medication, antibiotics, multivitamins, and supplements and their side effects.**
  - **Importance of follow-up care with health care provider.**
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
  - **Discuss with the patient where to obtain the supplies and medication needed for her wound management.**
  - **Set her up with the case manager to find a service that can help cover the cost of her supplies and medication.**
  - **Inquire about her insurance or assist her in getting set up with Medicaid or Medicare.**
  - **Arrange for home health care.**

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

- **That her wound is healing properly.**
- **Signs of infection are gone.**
- **The dressing is clean and intact.**
- **She is adhering to her medication regimen.**
- **That she understands what is going on with her wound, and to further educate her if she is unsure.**