

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.?

Delayed wound care due to improper cleaning. Possible noncompliance due to monetary reasons. Ineffective wound healing caused by the diabetes.

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?

I would teach N.J. how to properly treat any wounds she finds and perform proper foot care. I would teach her that because of her diabetes she could have nerve damage and won’t necessarily feel everything on her extremities and that she will have to evaluate them herself at least every day. I would teach her to avoid pedicures or trimming her toenails without a professional. I would teach N.J. that prior to performing a wound care experiment to follow up with her physician, as well as signs and symptoms of infection.

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

Provide resources of pharmacies that have the cheapest products or compared prices. Teach the patient how to be conservative with the equipment and take care of it. Provide the patient with resources giving multiple options for equipment and prices, so they don’t feel as if they have to buy the most expensive stuff.

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

I would anticipate that the wound would be in the healing stage and clean. I would want the patient to have her diabetes under control or show an improvement in her A1C and be able to teach back information that was taught earlier such as foot and wound care.