

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.? – Impaired skin integrity
2. What discharge teaching will you provide her? -I would teach N.J. about the importance of smoking cessation. Secondly, teach her the about the importance of cleaning her feet with soap and water, cleaning between her toes, wearing closed toed shoes and assessing her feet daily.
3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget? – I would show N.J. how to use GoodRX for her meds, as she may need a nicotine patch. I might also ask a social worker to stop by so they can discuss her options in regard to any supplies she might need.
4. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care? – I would anticipate a follow up for wound care. I think she would also benefit from some counseling as she may be lonely.