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.?
   The priority nursing diagnoses for N.J include: infection, sensation/ perception, physical injury.

2. What discharge teaching will you provide her?
   The discharge teachings I would as a nurse would include foot/ hygiene care. I would inform the patient how important it is to check her feet every night, to never soak her feet, to make sure her feet are dry after getting them wet, and I would inform the patient to keep her diabetes under control.

3. How can you advocate for N.J. regarding required medical equipment, supplies, and medications and their cost on a limited budget?
   Some of the ways I would advocate for N.J. would include taking to case management about different costs for supplies and medications, I would also send them home with some of the supplies that are in the central supplies room to last her a few days until she was able to get things cleared up with case management.

3. What expectation would you anticipate for N.J. regarding follow-up care?
   I would expect N.J to keep the wound clean and to take her medications. I would anticipate a few of the medications to be missed because of her age but for the most part I would expect N.J. to keep the wound clean and covered with wound supplies.