Faculty Practice

Good News

This month, we highlight Dr. Terri Armstrong, Associate Professor of Nursing in the Department of Integrative Nursing Care. Dr. Armstrong has a faculty practice at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDACC). Prior to joining the UTHSC-SON, Dr. Armstrong was a nurse practitioner working in a collaborative practice with two physicians caring for patients with central nervous system tumors and neurological complications of cancer at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. She had worked with one of these physicians, Dr. Mark Gilbert, since 1993. Since joining the University Of Texas School Of Nursing at Houston (UTSONH), Dr. Armstrong has continued her practice with Dr. Gilbert. In this role, she serves as a direct care provider to patients within the Neuro-Oncology Department at MDACC. Patients referred to this practice come from all over the United States as well as international destinations. The Neuro-Oncology group at MDACC is one of the largest of this type of specialty practice within the country and is staffed with 8 nurse practitioners and 11 physicians. The primary patient population consists of patients with primary brain tumors. These are tumors which arise from the constituent elements of the brain, are a relatively rare type of cancer, effect approximately 35,000 newly diagnosed patients each year in the United States, and represent approximately 2% of all cancers. The most common tumor type, Glioblastoma Multiforme, is associated with significant morbidity and mortality with a median survival of 14 months despite aggressive therapy. In her role as an advanced practice nurse, Dr. Armstrong is involved in the medical management and education of patients. Patients are initially seen collaboratively and a treatment plan is formulated. Dr. Armstrong then manages the patients during treatment which includes management of neurological complications as a result of the tumor, side effects of treatment, and management of co morbid conditions. She also works with the clinic nurse to provide patient and family education and serves as the primary contact for any telephone triage issues. As a result of this practice, Dr. Armstrong was involved in establishing the nurse practitioner practice guidelines for this department and along with the advanced practice nurse group within neuro-oncology, created an algorithm for evaluation and treatment of seizures. These seizure management algorithms, in addition to management of four other neurologic complications of cancer (meningitis, peripheral neuropathy, brain metastases, and neurotoxicity) that they developed have also been incorporated in the textbook, Protocols for Oncology Nursing Practice. This text is one of the standard references used to guide advanced practice at MDACC. In her role at MDACC, Dr. Armstrong also assisted with development of a guide book for new patients, and development and review of educational materials regarding seizures and peripheral neuropathy, and order sets for standard treatment regimens. In addition to utilizing her practice site for innovative practice, Dr. Armstrong uses her faculty practice site to precept UTSONH nurse practitioner students and new staff within the MDACC Neuro-Oncology Department. Finally, her clinical site allows her to pursue research involving symptom and toxicity management for patients and families affected with this devastating diagnosis. Recent scholarly activities resulting from this clinical practice include:

Publications:


Presentations:


Regards,
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