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Contact: Stephanie Sayen
ssayen@aphon.org
847.375.4864

Nurses develop standardized checklist to better educate parents of children newly diagnosed with cancer

Chicago (April 23, 2018) - Parents and others who care for children newly diagnosed with cancer must learn a wealth of new information to safely do so at home, and it is a core responsibility of pediatric oncology nurses to educate them, often based on practices that vary widely by institution. A new article in the *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* presents one standard checklist that nurses can use to ensure that information delivery is accurate and complete.

A team of 19 nurses and two parent advocates from the Children's Oncology Group developed the checklist based on existing education checklists, expert recommendations, and team-based activities and discussions. The checklist includes:

- Topics to teach parents before they leave the hospital the first time, such as who and when to call for help, home medication dose and frequency, and post-operation wound care, if applicable
- Topics that should be taught to parents during the first month after their child's diagnosis, such as side effects of cancer treatment and nutrition
- Topics that should be discussed before the child finishes cancer treatment, such as risky behaviors to avoid, coping skills, and insurance issues

"Focusing education on the most important topics before the first hospital discharge and only teaching additional topics if parents have time to understand can help parents remember the important, relevant information," the authors commented. "This method can also prevent information overload for parents."

The authors also point out that the checklist can be employed widely across various institutions and can be individualized to use teaching strategies that optimize the educational process for caretakers of children newly diagnosed with cancer.

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The article, "A Standardized Education Checklist for Parents of Children Newly Diagnosed with Cancer: A Report from the Children's Oncology Group" by Rodgers et al., in the *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing*, is free to access for a limited time.

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Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing (JOPON) is the official publication of the Association of Pediatric Hematology / Oncology Nurses (APHON). *JOPON* is a peer-reviewed bi-monthly journal offering pediatric

hematology, oncology, and immunology nurses in clinical practice and research, pediatric social workers, epidemiologists, clinical psychologists, child life specialists and nursing educators original research and definitive reviews on the whole spectrum of nursing care of childhood cancers, including leukemias, solid tumors and lymphomas, and hematologic disorders.

APHON is the professional organization for pediatric hematology/oncology nurses and other pediatric hematology/oncology healthcare professionals. Its members are dedicated to promoting optimal nursing care for children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer and blood disorders, and their families.

The Children's Oncology Group (COG) (www.childrensoncologygroup.org) is a member of the NCI National Clinical Trials Network (NCTN) and is the world's largest organization devoted exclusively to childhood and adolescent cancer research with over 9,000 experts worldwide working in over 200 COG member institutions. COG's mission is to improve the cure rate and outcome for all children with cancer. Research reported in the article that is the subject of this press release was supported by the Children's Oncology Group, the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health under award number U10CA 1808886. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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