Pain Attitudes and Knowledge Among RNs, Pharmacists, and Physicians on an Inpatient Oncology Service

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Patients with cancer often experience pain, yet studies continue to document inadequate and inappropriate assessment and management of cancer-related pain. This study aimed to evaluate the attitudes and knowledge of inpatient oncology healthcare providers toward pain management by surveying nurses, pharmacists, and physicians working on the inpatient oncology units at an academic medical center. Healthcare providers generally reported positive attitudes toward pain management but were deficient in their knowledge of pain management. The authors suggest that pharmacists become more integral members of palliative care teams and actively participate in rounds. A need exists for educational programs in pain management for healthcare providers, especially for those who do not routinely care for patients with cancer.

At a Glance

- Nurses’, pharmacists’, and physicians’ attitudes toward pain management were positive and consistent, but physicians were more likely to believe that patients over-reported pain.
- Pharmacists and RNs who routinely cared for patients with cancer performed better on questions about cancer pain than physicians and RNs with less opportunity to care for such patients.
- Nurses, pharmacists, and physicians need continuing education in pain management.

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