Veno-Occlusive Disease in Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation Recipients

Elisabeth C. Sosa, RN, MSN, OCN®

Veno-occlusive disease (VOD) is a potentially fatal complication of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation that affects the liver, as well as other organs. Although mild cases resolve on their own, severe cases of VOD carry a high mortality rate. The diagnosis usually is clinically based, with nonspecific signs such as weight gain, ascites, hepatomegaly, right upper quadrant abdominal pain, and elevated serum bilirubin. Although studies are ongoing, no U.S. Food and Drug Administration–approved treatments for VOD exist to date. Therefore, supportive care is a critical part of the treatment plan. Oncology nurses should be familiar with the risk factors and clinical signs of VOD so that patients can be monitored closely for its occurrence. Accurate and timely recognition of VOD is crucial for appropriate treatment.

Elisabeth C. Sosa, RN, MSN, OCN®, is a staff nurse at Florida Hospital in Orlando. The author takes full responsibility for the content of the article. The author did not receive honoraria for this work. The content of this article has been reviewed by independent peer reviewers to ensure that it is balanced, objective, and free from commercial bias. No financial relationships relevant to the content of this article have been disclosed by the author, planners, independent peer reviewers, or editorial staff. Sosa can be reached at elisabeth.c.sosa@gmail.com, with copy to editor at CJONEditor@ons.org. (First submission November 2011. Revision submitted February 2012. Accepted for publication March 4, 2012.)

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