108 palliative care workers and 184 student nurses completed a self administered questionnaire incorporating demographic data and information on recurrent dreams and nightmares.

The data was analyzed using SPSS and non-parametric statistics. The preliminary analysis indicates a significantly lower incidence of recurrent dreams and nightmares in palliative care workers compared with student nurses. However, the contents of the dreams differed between the 2 groups. The paper will discuss the results and interventions which help those experiencing recurrent dreams and nightmares.

1385 POSTER

THE CANCER TREATMENT UNIT GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

J. Stuttaford, L. Dougherty
Department of Oncology, St. George's Healthcare, London SW17 0QT, U.K.

An individual patient information guide was developed for use in an oncology treatment unit. The aims of the Package were to:

(1) Provide personalised information to support verbal interaction. (2) to provide an easy to read and easily understood guide for every patient relating to their own treatment plan. (3) to facilitate good communication between the patient and health care professionals.

The guide comprises of an A5 loose-leaf binder with separate pages which can be added or removed according to the individual patient needs. A skeleton format of basic information and contact numbers are included with more optional comprehensive and detailed pages e.g. chemotherapy regimens and control of side-effects, investigations and care of skin tunnelled catheters.

An evaluation was carried out to analyse the success in satisfying patient needs. A questionnaire was administered to patients and the results showed that patients felt that it was an informative, clear document that answered most of their queries and relieved their anxieties although some felt the need for more illustrations.

The guide has since been reproduced for use in one other hospital and it is currently being adapted for use in cancer treatment centres throughout the United Kingdom.

1386 POSTER

THE ROLE OF NURSING DIAGNOSIS IN CONTINUOUS CANCER CARE

M. Velepič, J. Bostič-Pavlovič, B. Skela-Savič, Z. Erjavšek, B. Sekić
Institute of Oncology, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The continuity of cancer care is ensured through nursing documentation where nursing diagnoses are used for the sake of better understanding and consistent terminology. In our study which has been under way for two years now, the following nursing diagnoses were found to be most frequent: anxiety, affected oral mucosa, altered body image, liability to infection, persistent pain, malnutrition, sexual dysfunction, decreased physical activity and inability to comprehend and respond due to cancer related problems. It has been found that a stage classification of nursing diagnoses related to skin, mucosa and other tissue damage, as well as to conditions encountered specifically in cancer patients would be necessary. We believe that adequate documentation and consistent nursing diagnosis are essential for effective communication between nurses as well as for continuous cancer care.

1387 POSTER

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ADAPTATION IN CANCER PATIENTS

M. Jacquemet, A. Murphy, M. Warrick, M. Rabeus
Division of Oncology, University Hospital of Geneva, Switzerland

The experience of cancer causes emotional reactions such as anxiety and depression, and can alter communication with family and friends. Good social support improves emotional adaptation but remains difficult to evaluate.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between the significance and quality of social support in cancer patients and their emotional status.

Randomly selected patients in an outpatient oncology clinic were studied using a questionnaire which included the International Breast Cancer Study Group sociodemographic evaluation, a modified Norbeck social support evaluation, a brief medical report and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale. Our results demonstrate the importance of systematically evaluating the degree of patients satisfaction with their social support network in view of providing appropriate assistance.

1388 POSTER

THE PATIENT-HELD RECORD: AN AID IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CANCER PATIENTS IN A GYNAECOLOGY DEPARTMENT

H. Wessels, A.M. Hetharia, C. Sturkenboom, A.P.M. Heintz
Department of Patient-education, Universal Hospital Utrecht, The Netherlands

In an attempt to improve communication to cancer patients with regard to their illness, a project was started in May 1993 in our Gynaecology Out-Patients Department (OPD). Our aims were the following:

(a) to improve the autonomy of the patient

(b) to enhance the role of nurses in counseling

(c) to improve communication between in- and out-patient department

Analysis of the communication process has resulted in the development of a Patient-Held Record, containing a written condensation of all consultations. Communication between professionals and patients was improved by introducing checklists for the purpose of counselling. The communication between the in- and out-patient department was aided by the introduction of structured referral notes.

Results The information given at the OPD to cancer patients usually has far reaching consequences and occurs at a highly emotional moment. It is therefore quite understandable that the information given by the doctor is usually not completely understood. Many patients will want further information regarding their disease soon after leaving the consulting room. The introduction of the Patient-Held Record enables them to read the information provided at a time of their own choosing and thereby reducing their dependence.

Adding checklists will enable health professionals to ensure that the information given is complete and complies with the recent introduction of legislation on professional conduct. Communication between health workers is greatly improved by structuring the written notes. A postal survey was held amongst the first 80 patients with regards to their experience in the use of the Patient-Held Record, the findings of which will be presented.

1389 POSTER

WHO NEEDS INFORMATION—THE CHANGING TRENDS

L. Woolf, C. Dickens
Cancer Information Service, BACUP, 3 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3JR, U.K.

BACUP is a cancer charity which has been providing information, counselling and support for 10 years. The Cancer Information Service has responded to over 200,000 requests for information and support. Analysis of our data reveals changing trends in who asks for information and what they ask for. Factors such as age, gender and social class affect how people access and use the services BACUP provides. Nurses play a crucial role in the direct provision of information and also in referring people to other agencies which can help them. Our experience raises questions about differences in information seeking behaviours which are important for nurses to incorporate into their daily work supporting cancer patients and their families.