Module Objectives

- To describe the dynamic role of the nurse in the holistic care of a patient receiving ARV treatment.
- To equip nurses with a sense of importance and belief in their role in the overall success of ARV treatment.
- To encourage nurses to consider the diversity of their role in the management of patients taking ARV drugs.

Slide Presentation: The Role of the Nurse

(All slides read from left to right)

The Role of the Nurse

ARV Nurse Training Programme

Marcus McGilvray & Nicola Willis

These may be true

BUT....

they underestimate the immense importance of the dynamic role nurses have to play

And this is why!

We asked nurses their perceived role in ARVs....

Weights & Vital signs

Talking with patients

Administration & paperwork

What else involve me?

These may be true

ARVs

The Goal!

To decrease or reverse immune system damage associated with HIV infection,

thus improving quality of life and reducing HIV-related morbidity and mortality

ARV Nurse Training, Africaid, 2004
The role of the nurse is......

......to ensure that this goal is achieved!

that quality of life is improved for patients with HIV
by decreasing or reversing immune system damage with Antiretroviral drugs

How?

Historically, nurses have provided holistic care for their patients, attending to their physical, psychological and social needs in order to promote quality of life.

Patients requiring ARVs are no different and require our whole range of skills and expertise, right from the beginning and from then onwards......

Starting ARVs

Early days are EXTREMELY influential in ARV success

Why?

• Patient is not ready? – he/she may be non-adherent
• Patient doesn’t understand the drugs? – he/she may take them incorrectly
• Patient doesn’t expect side effects? – he/she may be shocked and get ‘put off’ ARVs or not report any problems
• Patient feels alone and unsupported? – he/she may be frightened, reluctant to take drugs or to report any problems

Our diverse nursing role!

• Blood collection (baseline results eg CD4, VL, U&E, FBC)
• Education for patient re ARVs (What are they?, Side effects)
• Counselling re starting ARVs
• Assessing ARV Readiness
• Liaising with MDT re ARV readiness
• Adherence support

Monitoring ARVs

ARV success depends on regular monitoring of their efficacy & safety

This is assessed using a combination of:

• Verbal Reporting: “I feel much stronger now”
  “I keep getting headaches”
  “My appetite is much better”
  “I haven’t had any side effects”

• Clinical Examination: eg weight gain; “feels better”
  rash; jaundice

• Laboratory Testing: CD4, Viral Load, U&E, FBC, Resistance testing

Nurses role in Monitoring

Verbal Reporting

• Nurses are often the first point of contact
• Patients often feel more comfortable raising issues with nurses
• Nursing activities (eg vital signs) provides opportunity for informal conversation re problems/issues

Assessment: Is patient experiencing any side effects? How are they feeling? Any problems?

Follow up: Referral of concerns to Doctor; Recognising urgent referrals; Good MDT communication

Nurses Role in Monitoring

Clinical Examination

• Again, nurses are often the first point of contact
• Clinical examination can take place during other activities eg blood taking

Assessment: Recognising ARV side effects (eg jaundice, rash) or improved patient health

Referral: prompt, appropriate intervention

Counselling: reassurance for patient

Encouragement for patient doing well!!!

Laboratory testing

A variety of different blood tests are used to measure the efficacy and safety of ARVs

The results provide essential information re:

• Disease progression
• Is patient safe to continue taking regimen?
• Is the patient resistant to the ARV regimen?
• Is the patient at risk of OIs and in need of prophylaxis?
• Psychological support & encouragement for patient

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And who takes the blood?

Nurses!!

...and we have a direct responsibility to ensure that accurate results are obtained which may inform appropriate clinical decisions.

Getting it right!

Correct clinical decisions depend on meaningful clinical laboratory information.

This depends on proper specimen collection:

Common blood tests:
- CD4 Count
- Viral Load
- Safety Labs (FBC, LFTs, U&Es)
- Resistance Testing

Getting it wrong....

Improper technique may lead to danger signs being over-looked and/or mismanaged.

Case scenario A
A patient is in his third month of ARVs. The wrong name is put on his blood sample so the results are lost. The doctor is therefore not aware that his LFTs are dangerously high.

Case scenario B
An urgent CD4 count is required for a patient. The blood bottle is insufficiently filled and the lab cannot get an accurate reading.

When taking blood......

- Correct patient labelling!
- Correct tube for test
- Correct volume for test
- Correct request form
- Securely attached label to bottle
- Clear, legible writing on bottle/form
- Secure, designated container for blood bottles

And don’t forget.....

- Check patient details are correct!
- Label blood bottles before collection
- Always wear gloves for collection of specimens!
- NEVER re-sharpen a needle
- Dispose of used needle in near by sharps bin
- Then wash your hands
- Wear NEW gloves for the next patient!
- Take your time! A few moments longer may prevent needle sticks!

Nurses and Adherence

- Educate, educate, educate............
- Support, support, support............
- Counsel, counsel, counsel............

You can never do this enough!!

It is the single most important thing you can do for your patients.

Don’t forget Safer Sex!

Safer Sex is essential to prevent:

- Transmission: someone on ARVs can still transmit HIV, even if their viral load is undetectable.
- Re-infection: someone on ARVs may be re-infected with a different strain of HIV, making treatment success more difficult.

Nurses should take every opportunity to counsel about safer sex practices.

Variety of Roles

- Educating
- Counselling
- Assessing
- Managing
- Referring
- Administering
Fulfilling these roles

- **Knowledge**: Know your drugs, side effects, doses & dietary requirements
- **Understanding**: Be aware of the challenges and the psycho-social needs of YOUR patient
- **Confidence**: Your patient will look to you for advice, information and support

**THESE ALL ENHANCE NURSING CARE!**

4 Steps to Getting it right!

- Make Time
- Knowledge
- Open, Supportive, Non-judgmental Approach
- A Belief in the Importance of your Role!

SO.... Not just about TASKS

Counsel  Empathise  Impart knowledge
Enquire  Talk  Support
Encourage

In summary...

Patients on ARVs face an immense challenge

Yours is an extremely exciting role, where you **CAN** and **WILL** have a huge influence on the success of ARV treatment for your patients
Learning Exercises: ‘The Role of the Nurse’

A. Group Work

Divide the group in to pairs. Give each pair one of the following nursing roles, as discussed in the slide presentation:

- Educating
- Counselling
- Assessing
- Managing
- Administrating
- Referring

Ask each pair to discuss the following questions with reference to the role they have been given:

1) **When** does the nurse engage in that role during the overall care of a patient on/considering ARVs?

**Trainers prompt:** Encourage trainees to think of all the occasions that they would be involved in that particular role when working with patients.

For example:
   i) Nurses are **assessing** patients at different times: assessing vital signs, assessing adherence and assessing side-effects.
   ii) Patients require **educating** in not just one issue but many different issues: safer sex, drug resistance, adherence and drug side effects.

2) **Why** is this important in the overall success of ARV therapy?

**Trainers prompt:** Encourage trainees to think of a variety of different reasons why that role is so significant in ensuring ARV success.

For example:
   i) Assessing adherence is vital to ensure patients are taking their ARVs as prescribed because adherence is one of the most important factors in treatment success.
   ii) Educating patients about drug resistance is important in order to help them understand the importance of adherence whilst educating about drug side effects is important if patients are to recognise and report them.

3) **What** knowledge and skills do nurses require to fulfil the role effectively?

Allow 15 – 20 minutes for this exercise and then allow trainees to feedback their responses to the group.