



Critical Care Nursing Experience for a Terminal Oral Cancer Patient

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INTRODUCTION

In 2023, oral cancer was the fourth leading cause of cancer death among men in Taiwan. Terminal-stage patients often experience airway obstruction due to tumor compression, requiring emergency intubation and ICU admission. This leads to communication difficulties, heightened anxiety, and complex nursing needs.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This case utilized Gordon’s 11 Functional Health Patterns for assessment. The patient’s physical and psychological status was evaluated through observation, writing tools, and collaboration with the healthcare team. Four major health problems were identified: ineffective airway clearance, sleep disturbance, death anxiety, and pain.

Key Interventions

1. Collaborated with respiratory therapists to maintain airway patency and implement pulmonary rehabilitation.
2. Applied music therapy to reduce anxiety and improve sleep quality.
3. Introduced dignity therapy and family participation to address end-of-life emotional needs.
4. Provided pharmacological and non-pharmacological pain management, including morphine and touch-based comfort care.

DISCUSSION

Caring for terminal oral cancer patients in the ICU presents complex challenges.

This case shows the value of interdisciplinary, evidence-based interventions—such as music and dignity therapy—to reduce anxiety and enhance end-of-life comfort (Jespersen et al., 2022; Huang & Chang, 2020).

Even in ICU settings, human-centered care preserves dignity at end of life.

CONCLUSIONS

This case highlights the importance of holistic, interdisciplinary, and evidence-based care for terminal oral cancer patients in ICU settings. By integrating respiratory, psychological, and palliative interventions, nursing care can significantly improve the patient's quality of life during end-of-life care.

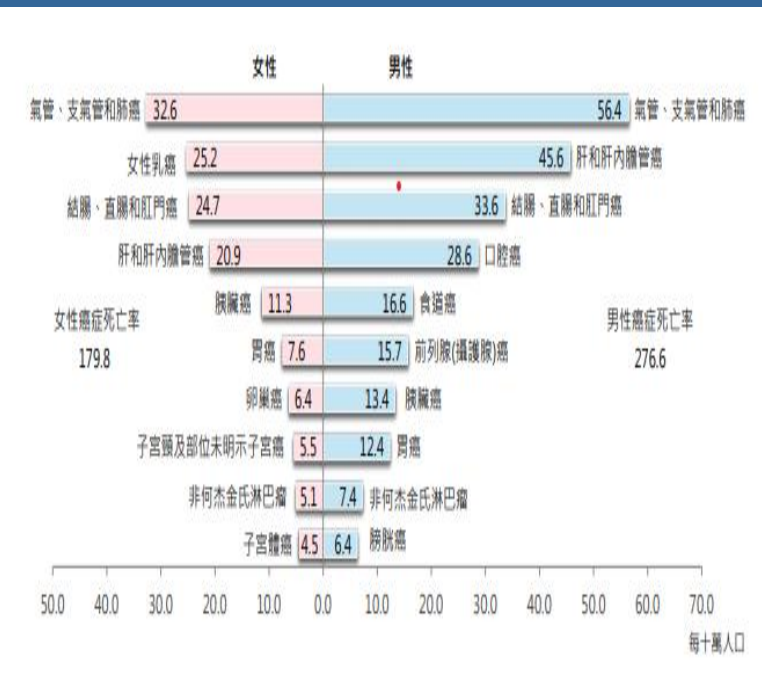


Figure 1. Top causes of cancer mortality by gender in Taiwan, 2023.

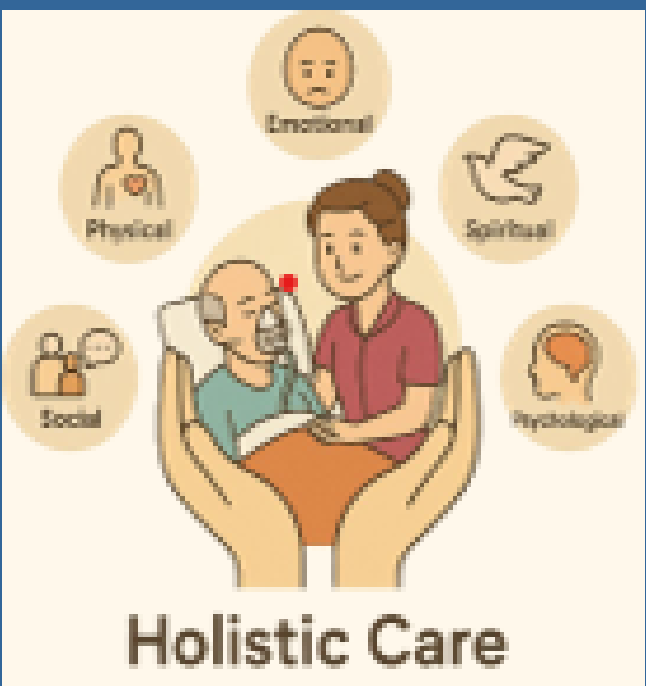


Figure 2. illustration of interdisciplinary Holistic Nursing for End-of-life Care

REFERENCES

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