

Enhancing Skin Protection Knowledge and Practices of Veterans Administration Nurses

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Background

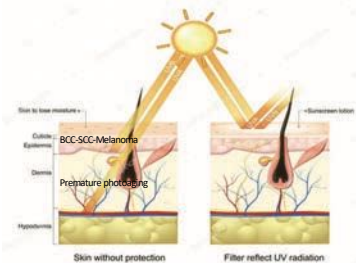
- Worldwide, skin cancer is the most common cancer, yet it is preventable
- Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) from the sun and other sources, and genetics contribute to skin carcinogenesis and premature photoaging
- Veterans and persons living and working in sun-rich areas are at increased risk
- Medical and nurse practitioner students show lack of skin protection knowledge and inadequate skin protection practices

Purpose Statement

- The purpose of this DNP project was to develop, implement, and evaluate an educational module focused on skin cancer, premature photoaging, and skin protection for advanced practice nurses (APNs) at a local VAMC in the Southwest
- A secondary aim was to assess patient education attempts before and after training

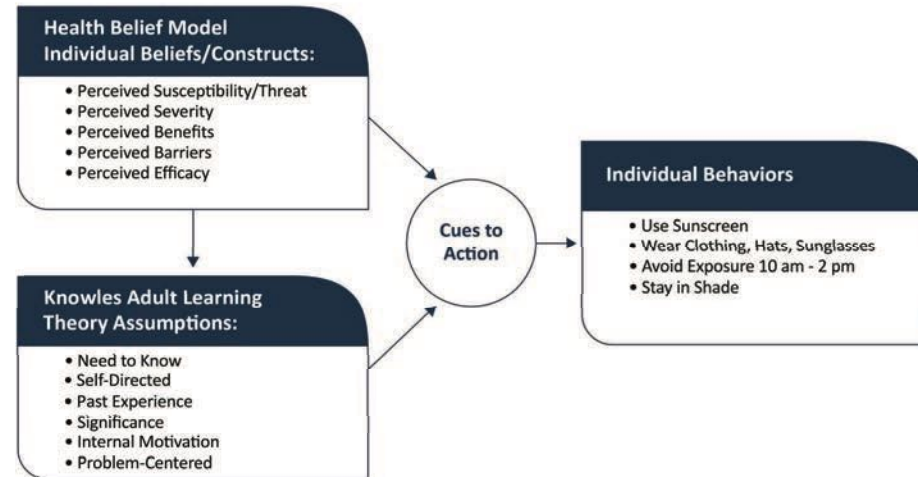
Methods

- The module was taught in summer 2018 with 31 participants during a quarterly APN meeting
- A pre and immediate post-test assessing knowledge, practices and beliefs was administered
- A second post-test was administered 12 weeks later



Supporting Framework

Health Belief Model and Knowles Adult Learning Theory Applied to Skin Protection



Results

Knowledge

- Skin cancer, UVR effects, skin protection knowledge scores increased by 17% post training
- The highest score increase was related to the cause of premature photoaging, $p < .001$

Practices

- Skin protection practices significantly increased from 3.3 at pre-test to 4.9 times per week at 12 weeks
- Significant increases in patient education attempts were reported at 12 weeks, $X^2(4) = 24.2, p < .0001$
- Number of nurses who "rarely" recommend skin protection decreased from 17% pre-test to 1% at 12 weeks

Health Belief Model

- Significant increases were found in items indexing HBM constructs of susceptibility and severity, and the perceived benefits of skin protection improved from pre-test to post-test

Discussion

- APNs may have inadequate knowledge and ability to protect themselves, and to teach others skin cancer and premature photoaging. Even after education, APNs had knowledge gaps pertaining to protection from UVR effects such as skin cancer and premature photoaging
- Use of HBM constructs facilitated understanding of these findings, which were consistent with prior studies

Effects of UV Radiation



Conclusion

- Results support prior studies showing that skin cancer and premature photoaging prevention knowledge is lacking among APNs
- The USPSTF recommendation of providing patient education for skin prevention is not being implemented
- Given the increasing rates of skin cancer, and the high costs of treatment, APNs are in positions to advocate skin protection as recommended by the CDC and USPSTF

Practice Application

- Short training such as that done in this project can enhance APN knowledge and skin protection practices
- Skin protection content should be added to APN/MSN programs curricula
- Training should be required for nurses working in ambulatory care at the VA in order to fully benefit Veterans