

Video Review

McCaffery on Pain: Nursing Assessment and Pharmacologic Intervention in Adults

Margo McCaffery

Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins Electronic Media, 1992.

Reviewed by Madeleine Buck

Any nurse who has questioned a patient's complaints of pain, who suffers "opiophobia," who does not believe in the use of tools and flow sheets to assess and monitor pain, who wonders how to manage pain in the recovering addicted-to-opioid client, or who seeks to increase the use of research findings in practice *must* view this video series! What makes Margo McCaffery's presentation worth watching is that it not only addresses important ideas about pain that should be generic to every nurse but adds some very practical and scientifically based approaches to working with the client who "hurts."

The four 30-minute videotapes (*Tape 1: Nursing assessment of the patient with pain; Tape 2: The three analgesic groups: Practical considerations; Tape 3: Use of opioid analgesics; Tape 4: Undertreatment of pain*) offer a very nice overview of pain assessment and interventions using pharmacological agents as resources. McCaffery shares her expert knowledge and incorporates results from several research studies throughout to support her ideas. American Pain Society and World Health Organization definitions and guidelines provide the framework throughout. Citing various research studies that indicate that nurses often challenge the patient's assessment of pain, McCaffery provides convincing evidence, through her dialogue and clinical enactments, that would make any nurse think twice the next time he or she had a client who says he has pain but does not "look" as if he does or who says she has no pain but actually does. The theoretical reasons used to explain these behaviours are addressed thoroughly, including such ideas as patients denying pain to protect their family members from worrying or assuming that the nurse would know if they are in pain or not! Viewing the several clinical examples

Madeleine Buck, N., M.Sc.(A), is a faculty lecturer in the School of Nursing at McGill University, Montreal.

where pain assessment tools and flow sheets are used to monitor and manage pain would convince anyone who has not incorporated this approach into their nursing to do so.

Though this is not directly outlined in their titles, the videos address the nurse-client relationship and the role the nurse plays in influencing how pain is managed by other members of the health-care team. Several enactments model some very lovely interactions between nurse and client, demonstrating how a collaborative approach of engaging the "hurter" in the assessment and plan leads to a much more effective outcome. The nurse also demonstrates how to present one's ideas to other health professionals – some relevant ideas for both novice and expert nurse! What makes the videos particularly relevant are the "application" segments that compare and contrast enacted pain scenarios and how they might be managed based on their clinical variations. Of particular interest is the review of "special situations" that includes the client recovering from opioid addiction and the elderly .

The challenge of holding the viewer's attention for two hours was met by using a variety of "learner friendly" approaches. The didactic material is presented orally and visually, but once basic ideas are covered the use of real nurses and patients interacting and comparing nurse and patient presentations and approaches across situations holds one's attention and interest quite well.

Are 1992 materials still relevant? A definite "yes" – though the names of pharmacological agents may have changed, what one will remember from this series are essential tenets of pain assessment and management that are based on solid principles that will stand the test of time. It is unfortunate that the series does not address non-pharmacological approaches to pain management nor the clinical variations in the pediatric population. Even though the series is intended for nurses, it could be of use to other health professionals, and maybe even the patients themselves. This is an excellent tool for students beginning their career in nursing and is of definite value for even the most seasoned of nurses who can be updated or reminded of specific ideas on pain and its impact on the patient.