

UC San Diego

Winter 2008 - UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing: Oncology Nursing

Title

Pain Management Nursing

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/04h0n1gd>

Journal

UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing, 1(1)

Author

Babcock, Sarah, BSN, RN

Publication Date

2008

Peer reviewed



Pain Management Nursing at UCSD

By Sarah Babcock, BSN, RN, BC

I cannot remember a time when I did not want to be a nurse. I even dressed up as a nurse for Halloween in Kindergarten. As I got older I did everything I could to learn about the nursing profession. I used to tag along with my mom's best friend, who was a nurse in the pediatric intensive care unit, just to watch her in action. I once observed a neurosurgery, thanks to another family friend. I became a candy striper as soon as I was old enough and later became a certified nursing assistant. I worked as a CNA throughout nursing school to improve my bedside skills. Finally I was able to realize my dream, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Iowa.

Nursing is a wonderful profession because of its variety and its flexibility. It offers choices to accommodate every interest and lifestyle. I started in adult intensive care in Chicago, but after a year decided to become a traveling ICU nurse. In one year I worked in Chicago, Palm Springs, Albuquerque, Washington DC, and Phoenix! When I arrived in San Diego I found the city that I loved. I stayed in ICU nursing for ten years. At that point I was ready for a change. The transition to outpatient surgery gave

me the opportunity to educate patients, to provide comfort during and after the procedures, while at the same time ensuring their safety through careful assessment and management. After two years I accepted a full-time position at UCSD. My interest in pain management nursing, which began in outpatient surgery, became a commitment.

Because of the educational pay benefit at UCSD I was able to attend an amazing three day Pain Resource Nurse Course at City of Hope in Duarte, California. Nurses from all over the country gathered to discuss current issues in pain management, pain assessment process, pharmacologic approaches (including side effect management), and the use of non-drug pain relief measures. I went on to become an ANCC (American Society for Pain Management Nursing) board certified pain management nurse. I studied harder for that test than any test I took in college! Acquiring and retaining the information for the certification exam has helped me immensely in my job. I love the sense of confidence I now feel when educating patients about procedures, adjunct modalities and medicines. One of my co-workers, who is also a

patient, commented that "Sarah does an exceptional job by explaining everything and working me through the exam. I am proud she is on my team, as well as my nurse when I am the patient."

I hope to have a long career at UCSD as a pain management nurse. Our procedure suite staff does an excellent job of treating the whole patient, showing genuine concern and interest, and real commitment to doing everything possible to ease pain. I hope that we are able to increase our community outreach about pain management in the future. It is clear that people with chronic pain are members of a misunderstood patient population. There is still much work to be done to improve our attitudes and our understanding, as well as our therapies.