(S111) BURN PREVENTION IN PATIENTS WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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Background: Each year over 500,000 people in the United States receive medical treatment related to burn injuries, and many more do not seek treatment. Burns are devastating injuries, and because so many are preventable, education is essential, especially for high-risk populations and health-care providers who care for them. Certain groups are more likely to sustain burns, such as patients with multiple sclerosis (MS). The literature contains very little information about burns in MS patients. However, since they are at higher risk for burns, they should be questioned about sources of injuries and potential hazards in their environments. They can then be asked about individual factors related to their disease processes that increase their likelihood of sustaining injuries. With this information, preventive interventions can be developed and taught to both patients and health-care providers.

Objectives: 1) Determine sources of burns that resulted in actual injuries and constitute potential hazards. 2) Identify factors related to MS that increase the risk of injuries. 3) Determine interventions to reduce the risk of injuries. 4) Provide health-care professionals with materials to educate patients about safety interventions.

Methods: A total of 100 patients were screened using a questionnaire to assess actual burn injuries that had been sustained as well as potential hazards that exist in their home environments. Factors associated with their disease process were analyzed for how they contribute to increased risk of injuries.

Results: Common burn injuries in the patients assessed included those sustained from cooking and/or baking, scalding resulting from bathing or cooking with hot liquids, and those resulting from use of curling irons. Appropriate safety interventions were developed, and a brochure containing this information was made available for patients and health-care providers.

Conclusions: Burn injuries are observed frequently in the MS population and can have devastating effects on independence and lead to increased mortality rates. Health-care providers should instruct patients about risks and interventions that can increase safety for these patients. There are many interventions that can be implemented by patients. There is a definite need for further study on this topic.

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