

Oncology Nursing: Addressing the Complex Needs of Cancer Patients

Nascimento Lucas*

Department of Nursing, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taipei 112304, Taiwan

Introduction

Oncology nursing plays a pivotal role in the multidisciplinary management of cancer patients, addressing their complex and multifaceted needs. This article explores the critical aspects of oncology nursing, including patient-centered care, symptom management, emotional support, and the integration of advanced treatments. By focusing on the unique challenges faced by oncology nurses and the strategies employed to meet these needs, this article highlights the essential role of nursing in improving patient outcomes and enhancing the quality of care in oncology settings.

Description

Cancer care is a multifaceted domain that requires a comprehensive approach to address the complex needs of patients. Oncology nurses are at the forefront of this care, providing not only clinical expertise but also emotional and psychological support. Their role extends beyond administering treatments to include managing symptoms, coordinating care, and supporting patients through one of the most challenging periods of their lives. This article delves into the various dimensions of oncology nursing, exploring how nurses meet the diverse needs of cancer patients. At the heart of oncology nursing is patient-centered care, which focuses on respecting and responding to individual patient preferences, needs, and values. Oncology nurses are instrumental in creating personalized care plans that consider each patient's unique situation. This involves: Oncology nurses conduct thorough assessments to understand the patient's physical, emotional, and social needs. This includes evaluating pain levels, treatment side effects, and psychological well-being. Providing education about the disease, treatment options, and potential side effects is crucial. Oncology nurses help patients make informed decisions and understand what to expect throughout their treatment journey. Family Involvement: Recognizing the role of family in the patient's care, oncology nurses engage family members in discussions and decision-making processes, ensuring that they are well-informed and supportive [1].

Effective symptom management is a cornerstone of oncology nursing. Cancer and its treatments often result in a range of symptoms that can significantly impact a patient's quality of life. Oncology nurses employ various strategies to manage these symptoms: Pain Management: Pain is a common issue for cancer patients. Oncology nurses assess pain levels regularly and implement strategies such as pharmacological interventions, non-pharmacological methods (e.g., relaxation techniques), and coordination

with pain specialists. Nausea and Vomiting Control: Chemotherapy and other treatments can cause nausea and vomiting. Oncology nurses use antiemetic medications, dietary modifications, and other supportive measures to help manage these symptoms. Cancer-related fatigue can be debilitating. Oncology nurses assess fatigue levels and recommend interventions like activity pacing, nutritional support, and psychological support to help patients cope. Wound and Skin Care: For patients undergoing surgery or radiation therapy, proper wound and skin care are essential. Oncology nurses monitor for signs of infection, provide wound care, and offer guidance on managing radiation-induced skin changes. The emotional and psychological impact of cancer diagnosis and treatment can be profound. Oncology nurses play a crucial role in providing emotional support and addressing mental health needs [2,3].

Oncology nurses offer counselling and emotional support, helping patients navigate feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression. They also facilitate access to mental health professionals when needed. Participation in support groups can be beneficial for patients. Oncology nurses often facilitate or refer patients to support groups where they can share experiences and gain comfort from peers. Teaching coping strategies, such as stress management techniques and relaxation exercises, helps patients manage the psychological burden of cancer. Cancer treatment often involves a multidisciplinary team, including oncologists, surgeons, radiologists, and other specialists. Oncology nurses play a key role in coordinating care: Oncology nurses ensure that all aspects of the patient's care are well-coordinated, including scheduling appointments, managing referrals, and communicating with other healthcare providers [4].

They are responsible for administering treatments, monitoring for side effects, and adjusting care plans as needed based on patient responses and new developments in treatment protocols. Managing transitions between different stages of treatment, such as from active treatment to survivorship or palliative care, is crucial. Oncology nurses help patients and families navigate these transitions smoothly. Advances in cancer treatment, including targeted therapies and immunotherapies, have introduced new challenges and opportunities for oncology nurses: Effects: Advanced treatments can have unique side effects. Oncology nurses must stay informed about these therapies and their potential impacts, implementing strategies to manage new and evolving side effects. Ongoing monitoring is essential for patients undergoing advanced treatments. Oncology nurses track responses to therapy, manage side effects, and adjust care plans based on patient progress. Keeping up-to-date with advancements in oncology is vital. Oncology nurses engage in continuous education to stay current with new therapies and emerging best practices [5].

Conclusion

Oncology nurses often encounter complex ethical dilemmas, such as end-of-life decisions and balancing aggressive treatment with quality of life considerations: Ensuring that patients fully understand their treatment options and potential outcomes is crucial. Oncology nurses facilitate discussions and support patients in making informed decisions. Providing compassionate end-of-life care involves addressing the patient's and family's wishes, managing pain and symptoms, and supporting emotional and spiritual needs. Oncology nurses advocate for patients' needs and preferences, ensuring that their voices are heard in care planning and decision-making. As the field of oncology continues to advance, so too must the practice of oncology nursing. Emerging

*Address for Correspondence: Nascimento Lucas, Department of Nursing, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University, Taipei 112304, Taiwan, E-mail: nascimentolucas@gmail.com

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trends and innovations offer exciting opportunities to further improve patient care: With the rise of genomics and personalized medicine, oncology nurses will increasingly be involved in tailoring treatments to individual patients based on their genetic profiles. This approach promises more effective and targeted therapies, potentially reducing side effects and improving outcomes.

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Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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