



Doing the Right Thing

In August 2003, the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) created organizational ethics guidelines, which can be viewed online at www.ons.org/ONSinformation/OrgEthics.pdf. These guidelines reflect the core values and beliefs of ONS and all of its components and serve as standards of conduct that guide decisions and actions.

The Society's guidelines pertain to its publications as well. The *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* (*CJON*) strives to publish accurate, up-to-date, unbiased information that is pertinent to clinical practice. In doing so, many steps are taken to uphold the shared values of ONS. For instance, the contents of all submitted manuscripts are regarded as privileged information. *CJON*'s submission guidelines stipulate that sources of information must be credited properly and cited accurately in the text and references. Authors are required to sign a statement attesting to substantial contribution to the work submitted. When authors receive assistance from professional medical writing firms in preparing an article, this assistance is disclosed to readers and noted on the article's first page. Likewise, financial compensation to authors is disclosed to our readers. When authors receive direct (e.g., an honorarium) or indirect financial gain (e.g., financial compensation for participation in speakers' bureaus or advisory boards) for writing about a specific topic on behalf of a company, the relationship between the author and company, as well as the particular product(s) manufactured by that company, is disclosed on the first page of the article.

When case studies are included in *CJON* articles and columns, only information that is pertinent to the subject matter is presented. Extraneous and potentially identifying information, such as the patient's occupation, city of residence, location of treatment facility, etc., is not included to protect patient privacy. Details are changed on occasion to maintain confidentiality of patients' medical history and

treatment. Patients are not coerced or pressured to be photographed, and they are not asked to be photographed to "help nurses learn" or for other altruistic reasons. Patients who are photographed sign consent forms



The *CJON* Editorial Board strives to present reader-requested information in an accurate and unbiased manner.

allowing *CJON* to publish their photographs, and whenever possible, the photographs are cropped to show only the area of interest (e.g., patients' faces are rarely seen unless a lesion or disorder involves the head and neck area).

The blinded peer review process, in which the identity of the author and reviewer is not revealed to one another, helps authors receive a fair and equitable review of their work. The review process also helps to ensure that the information published in *CJON* is truthful, reliable, and evidence-based. Through columns such as "Clinical Q & A," clinical practices that historically have been performed simply as they always have been done are examined. Clinical dilemmas and controversies also are discussed in *CJON* articles and columns, and a thorough recap of the evidence supporting or contradicting certain practices is presented. I welcome letters to the editor that question or critique previously published information, and whenever necessary, errata are brought to the attention of our readers and corrected information is published. The information published in *CJON* is scrutinized carefully throughout the submission, review, and production process because it ultimately helps to contribute to the development of the profession of oncology nursing.

The *CJON* mission statement and reader surveys guide the content and direction of the journal. Decisions are driven by the learning needs of oncology nurses and the individuals they serve, such as patients with cancer. Many

efforts are made to publish timely, relevant information that is directly applicable to practice. The focus of editorial board meetings is not to determine what we want but rather what our readers and their patients want and need to know.

Once that is determined, our job is to present that information accurately and in an unbiased manner. Many of *CJON*'s readers tell the editorial board that some pharmaceutical and product manufacturers and their sales representatives present information that they perceive to be somewhat slanted or one-sided and more marketing than informational in nature. The board strives to present the complete picture and discuss all sides of an issue.

An ONS value reflected in the organizational ethics guidelines is inclusiveness. ONS members can become involved with *CJON* in many ways. Opportunities are available for professional growth, such as authoring a *CJON* column or article or reviewing submitted manuscripts. Our writing mentorship program offers novice writers, as well as experienced authors, the chance to be involved with the journal and add to the body of knowledge of the nursing profession.

In the upcoming months, various ONS publications and resources, such as ONS Online, will present further information about the ONS organizational ethics guidelines and their implementation. The *CJON* Editorial Board and staff personally and collectively are committed to adhering to these standards of conduct, and readers are encouraged to review a copy of the complete guidelines.