Core Competencies for Bone Marrow Transplantation Nurse Practitioners

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The role of the bone marrow transplantation nurse practitioner (BMT NP) has been implemented in most major academic transplantation centers; however, little literature supports the scope of practice and core competencies in this setting. With an increasing shortage of oncologists, opportunities exist for BMT NPs to become leaders in the clinical management of BMT recipients. This article reviews the literature and current professional guidelines to develop core professional and clinical competencies for BMT NPs.

Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation, referred to as bone marrow transplantation (BMT) in this article, has become an accepted treatment modality for various hematologic malignancies. Transplantation recipients require intensive attention before, during, and after the procedure by a team of healthcare providers. BMT recipients rarely return to their primary care providers soon after transplantation because of treatment-related complications. Although people tend to return to survivorship clinics and their primary care providers after their first year post-transplantation, the majority of their care is received from the transplantation team. The American Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation has anticipated a shortage of transplantation oncologists in coming years because more than 50% will be older than age 50 by 2020, and an additional 1,264 new oncologists will be needed to fill the anticipated shortage (Gajewski et al., 2009). The deficit in physician coverage creates an excellent opportunity for nurse practitioners to become partners, as well as leaders, in the clinical management of BMT recipients.

Methods

A literature search was conducted using PubMed and MEDLINE® with the following search terms: bone marrow transplant, acute care nurse practitioners, nurse practitioners, allogeneic transplant, practice guidelines, role, and scope of practice. This search yielded one applicable publication (Griffith, 1999). A second search was performed adding the terms management and care of, and excluding the terms role and scope of practice. In addition, publications by the AACN and ONS were reviewed for practice guidelines, standards of care, and competencies.

This article synthesizes core competencies for BMT NPs from the literature and professional organizations. Because BMT NPs practice in outpatient settings, intensive care units, and acute, subacute, and ambulatory settings, the literature...